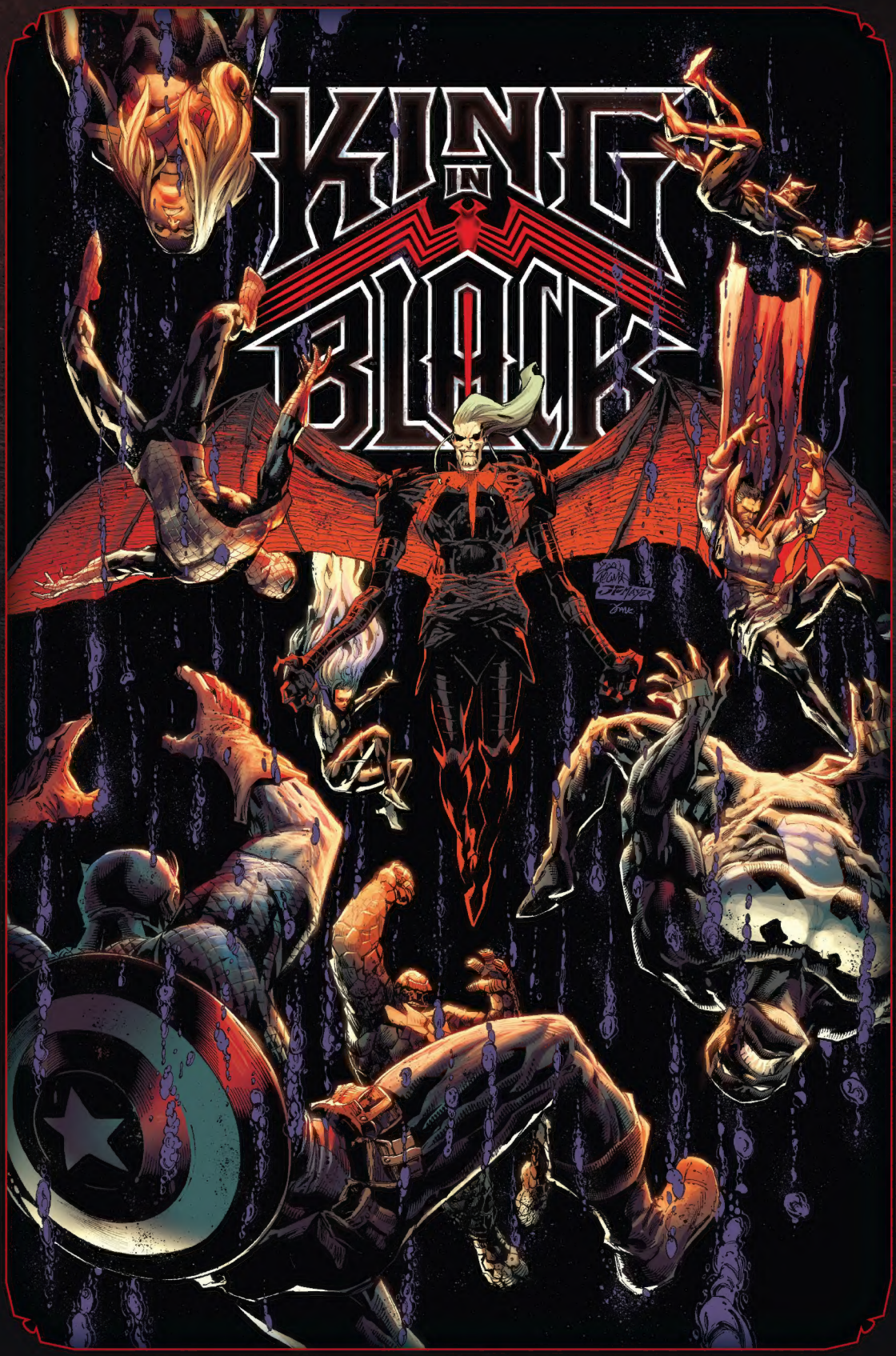

CATES • STEGMAN MARVEL MAYER • MARTIN

I AM GOING TO KILL YOUR WORLD.
KING IN BLACK

KING IN BLACK

KING IN BLACK #1-5
DONNY CATES WRITER
RYAN STEGMAN PENCILER
JP MAYER WITH RYAN STEGMAN (#5) INKERS
FRANK MARTIN WITH JASON KEITH (#5) COLOR ARTISTS
VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER
RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN COVER ART
WITH LOVE TO STAN & STEVE AND DAVID & TODD

VENOM #31-34
DONNY CATES WRITER
IBAN COELLO ARTIST
JESUS ABURTOV COLOR ARTIST
VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER
IBAN COELLO WITH FRANK MARTIN (#31) & JESUS ABURTOV (#32-34) COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: WICCAN AND HULKLING
TINI HOWARD WRITER
LUCIANO VECCHIO ARTIST
ESPEN GRUNDETJERN COLOR ARTIST
VC's ARIANA MAHER LETTERER
JIM CHEUNG & ALEJANDRO SÁNCHEZ COVER ART

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #10
AL EWING WRITER
JUANN CABAL ARTIST
FEDERICO BLEE COLOR ARTIST
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
RAFAEL ALBUQUERQUE & MARCELO MAIOLO COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: GHOST RIDER
ED BRISSON WRITER
JUAN FRIGERI ARTIST
JASON KEITH COLOR ARTIST
VC's JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERER
WILL SLINEY & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT
SI SPURRIER WRITER
JESÚS SAIZ ARTIST
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
DAN MORA & TAMRA BONVILLAIN COVER ART
SPECIAL THANKS TO WINNI WOO & YIFAN JIANG

THE UNION #1-2
PAUL GRIST WRITER
ANDREA DI VITO WITH PAUL GRIST (#1) PENCILERS
LE BEAU UNDERWOOD WITH DREW GERACI & PAUL GRIST (#1) INKERS
NOLAN WOODARD COLOR ARTIST
VC's TRAVIS LANHAM LETTERER
R.D. SILVA & DAVID CURIEL (#1); PACO MEDINA & DAVID CURIEL (#2) COVER ART

SPIDER-WOMAN #7-8
KARLA PACHECO WRITER
PERE PÉREZ ARTIST
FRANK D'ARMATA COLOR ARTIST
VC's TRAVIS LANHAM LETTERER
JUNGGEUN YOON COVER ART

DAREDEVIL #26-27
CHIP ZDARSKY WRITER
MARCO CHECCHETTO & MIKE HAWTHORNE PENCILERS
ADRIANO DI BENEDETTO WITH MARCO CHECCHETTO (#27) INKERS
MARCIO MENYZ COLOR ARTIST
VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER
MARCO CHECCHETTO & MATTHEW WILSON COVER ART

BLACK CAT #1-3
JED MACKAY WRITER
C.F. VILLA ARTIST
BRIAN REBER COLOR ARTIST
FERRAN DELGADO LETTERER
PEPE LARRAZ & MARTE GRACIA COVER ART

FANTASTIC FOUR #29-30
DAN SLOTT WRITER
ZÉ CARLOS ARTIST
JESUS ABURTOV COLOR ARTIST
VC's JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERER
MARK BROOKS COVER ART

MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #23
SALADIN AHMED WRITER
CARMEN CARNERO ARTIST
DAVID CURIEL COLOR ARTIST
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
TAURIN CLARKE COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: MARAUDERS
GERRY DUGGAN WRITER
LUKE ROSS ARTIST
CARLOS LOPEZ COLOR ARTIST
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
RUSSELL DAUTERMAN & MATTHEW WILSON COVER ART

SAVAGE AVENGERS #17-19
GERRY DUGGAN WRITER
KEV WALKER PENCILER
KEV WALKER (#17-18) & SCOTT HANNA (#19) INKERS
JAVA TARTAGLIA COLOR ARTIST
VC's TRAVIS LANHAM LETTERER
VALERIO GIANGIORDANO & FRANK D'ARMATA COVER ART

DEADPOOL #10
KELLY THOMPSON WRITER
GERARDO SANDOVAL PENCILER
VICTOR NAVA & GERARDO SANDOVAL INKERS
CHRIS SOTOMAYOR COLOR ARTIST
VC's JOE SADINO LETTERER
GERARDO SANDOVAL & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1-3
CLAY McLEOD CHAPMAN, FRANK TIERI, MARC DENARDIN, GEOFFREY THORNE, RODNEY BARNES & STEVE ORLANDO WRITERS
GUIU VILANOVA, DANILO S. BEYRUTH, KYLE HOTZ, JAN BAZALDUA & GERARDO SANDOVAL WITH VICTOR NAVA ARTISTS
DEAN WHITE, RACHELLE ROSENBERG & ERICK ARCINIEGA COLOR ARTISTS
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
TONY MOORE (#1-2); PHILIP TAN & SEBASTIAN CHENG (#3) COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: IRON MAN/DOCTOR DOOM
CHRISTOPHER CANTWELL WRITER
SALVADOR LARROCA ARTIST
GURU-eFX COLOR ARTIST
VC's TRAVIS LANHAM LETTERER
SALVADOR LARROCA & GURU-eFX COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK
AL EWING WRITER
AARON KUDER ARTIST
FRANK MARTIN & ERICK ARCINIEGA COLOR ARTISTS
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
ARON KUDER & FRANK MARTIN COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: SPIDER-MAN
JED MACKAY WRITER
MICHELE BANDINI PENCILER
MICHELE BANDINI & ELISABETTA D'AMICO INKERS
ERICK ARCINIEGA COLOR ARTIST

ALBERTO ALBURQUERQUE ARTIST, BACKUP STORY
RACHELLE ROSENBERG COLOR ARTIST, BACKUP STORY

VC's JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERER
CARLOS GÓMEZ & JESUS ABURTOV COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: SCREAM
CLAY McLEOD CHAPMAN WRITER
GARRY BROWN ARTIST
RACHELLE ROSENBERG COLOR ARTIST
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
INHYUK LEE COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: CAPTAIN AMERICA
DANNY LORE WRITER
MIRKO COLAK, STEFANO LANDINI, ROGÊ ANTÔNIO & NICO LEON ARTISTS
ERICK ARCINIEGA COLOR ARTIST
VC's JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERER
SALVADOR LARROCA & GURU-eFX COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1-4

JASON AARON & **TORUNN GRØNDEKK** WRITERS

NINA VAKUEVA ARTIST

TAMRA BONVILLAIN COLOR ARTIST

VC's **JOE SABINO** LETTERER

MATTIA DE IULIS COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1-3

SEANAN McGUIRE WRITER

FLAVIANO WITH **IG GUARA** (#2) ARTISTS

RICO RENZI COLOR ARTIST

VC's **ARIANA MAHER** LETTERER

KEN LASHLEY & **JUAN FERNANDEZ** COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1-3

MATTHEW ROSENBERG WRITER

JUAN FERREYRA ARTIST

VC's **JOE SABINO** LETTERER

KYLE HOTZ & **DAN BROWN** COVER ART

S.W.O.R.D. #2-4

AL EWING WRITER

VALERIO SCHITI WITH **RAY-ANTHONY HEIGHT**, **BERNARD CHANG** & **NICO LEON** (#3) ARTISTS

MARTE GRACIA COLOR ARTIST

VC'S ARIANA MAHER LETTERER

VALERIO SCHITI & **MARTE GRACIA** COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: BLACK PANTHER

GEOFFREY THORNE WRITER

GERMÁN PERALTA ARTIST

JESUS ABURTOV COLOR ARTIST

VC'S JOE SABINO LETTERER

LEINIL FRANCIS YU & **SUNNY GHO** COVER ART

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #1-5

KURT BUSIEK WRITER

BENJAMIN DEWEY ARTIST

JONAS SCHARF ARTIST, PRESENT-DAY SEQUENCES

TRÍONA FARRELL COLOR ARTIST

VC's **JOE CARAMAGNA** LETTERER

LEINIL FRANCIS YU & **SUNNY GHO** COVER ART

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1-5

PETER DAVID WRITER

GREG LAND PENCILER

JAY LEISTEN INKER

FRANK D'ARMATA COLOR ARTIST

VC's **JOE SABINO** LETTERER

GREG LAND & **FRANK D'ARMATA** WITH **JAY LEISTEN** (#5) COVER ART

KING IN BLACK HANDBOOK

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF DALE SURPRENANT (1948-2020)

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INTRODUCTION

A few years back, an explosion occurred that changed my life forever.

I had recently finished drawing the "Venom Inc." event for Marvel, and I was waffling about what I wanted to do with my future. I loved every minute of my Marvel career to that point, but I was feeling a bit burnt out. I was offered a few gigs and, for the first time in my entire career, I actually said no to them. Nothing felt right.

And then Devin Lewis stepped in.

He asked me if I'd be interested in drawing Venom. And to be honest, I wasn't that interested! I had just drawn Venom Inc. Why more Venom?

Then Devin implored me to please just get on the phone with Donny Cates, whom I only knew from one interaction that left me feeling like this guy was either insane or brilliant. Or both!

I gave in to Devin and took Donny's call, and the bomb went off.

Donny started excitedly telling me about dragons and swords and this space god named Knull, and I got excited and started throwing visuals back at him, and we spent hours on the phone in what I can only describe as a creative explosion. He talked me through the end of the entire saga that would culminate in a story arc entitled "King in Black." Who on Earth plans a comic story that will take four years to fully tell?

I left that call DESPERATE to draw this book.

Somehow, it all worked out. What was initially planned as a story arc in Venom turned into a massive company-wide comic event, because people loved what Donny and I were doing. Other writers and artists bought in and created great stories surrounding our main story, and you now hold all of those great stories in your hands.

I genuinely believe that the work that I, JP Mayer (inks) and Frank Martin (colors) did on this book is far and away the best work of our careers. I got to draw Venom with a @&$%ing ax!!!

Thank you to everyone who has enjoyed this creative explosion.

—Ryan Stegman

KING IN BLACK #1

REIGN

HE'S HERE.
WE CAN FEEL HIM, SCREAMING THROUGH THE BLACK, RACING TOWARD THE WHOLE OF CREATION...
HIS HANDS WRAPPING AROUND THE WORLD'S THROAT.
CAP? IT'S ME...
THIS IS IT.
NO MORE RUNNING.
NO MORE HIDING.
IT'S TIME.
KNULL. THE LORD OF THE ABYSS...
...THE GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES...
...HAS ARRIVED.

THE CALL GOES OUT.

ALL HANDS ON DECK.

IF THE PLAN HOLDS, THE EVACUATIONS WILL START ANY SECOND NOW.

MY *OTHER* CAN ALREADY FEEL THE PANIC RISING IN THE AIR.

I SENSE IT TRYING TO CALM MY NERVES AS WELL...

BUT IT'S NOT KNULL THAT'S MAKING MY HEART SKIP...

NO. THAT FEAR WILL COME LATER...

RIGHT NOW, I'M SCARED...

...OF THIS.
COMICS
OF WAKING MY SON UP INTO THIS NIGHTMARE.
DYLAN'S BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH.
HE DESERVES BETTER THAN THIS. DESERVES TO BE INNOCENT. TO BE A CHILD.
I WISH ON EVERY DISAPPEARING STAR IN THE SKY THAT I COULD JUST LET HIM SLEEP.
THAT MY SON NEVER HAS TO FACE THE HORRORS OF THIS WORLD I HAVE BROUGHT HIM INTO.

THAT HE NEVER HAS TO INHERIT MY DARKNESS.
DYLAN?
WH... HEY... WHAT'S--
I'M SORRY, BUDDY. BUT--
I KNOW. I CAN FEEL IT TOO.
HE'S HERE, ISN'T HE?
...
YES. NOW, LISTEN TO ME. WE NEED TO--

--MOVE! COME ON, PEOPLE, IT'S GO TIME. GROUND TEAMS AND EVACUATION SHIPS ARE MOBILIZING IN DROP SITES AS WE SPEAK, BUT WE ARE ON DECK FIRST.
LET'S GET MEAN, SHALL WE?
AVENGERS MOUNTAIN. NOW.
TONY? WHERE ARE WE?
HARD TO SAY, CAP. FROM THE INTEL THAT BROCK GAVE US, WE KNOW THAT KNULL AND HIS SYMBIOTE HORDE DON'T LEAVE HEAT SIGNATURES.
SO WE DON'T HAVE AN EXACT LOCK JUST YET. BUT THEY'LL TRIP OVER OUR LAND MINES EITHER WAY.
IS THAT WHAT WE'RE CALLING THEM?
SILVER LININGS, CAP.
"HAVING A LEFTOVER ARMADA OF DERELICT KREE AND SKRULL WARSHIPS FLOATING AROUND IN THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE MIGHT JUST GIVE US THE EDGE WE NEED."
YOU JUST LIKE TURNING THINGS INTO BOMBS.
OLD HABITS. HEY, SPEAKING OF BOMBS, ANY WORD ON THE BIG MAN YET?
STILL WAITING. I'D SAY A PRAYER IF I WERE--
HEADS UP!
GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS, BOYS.
LOOKS LIKE WE FOUND THEM...

"...BUT WE'RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER BOMB."
PFFT.
HOW DARE YOU.
FIRE!

VWWWAAAAAAAAAMMMMM

CLOSING IN, EDDIE! HAVE TO HURRY!

I KNOW! WE HAVE TO GET DYLAN TO SAFETY BEFORE--

AGHH!

AGH!

DAD?!

THAT'S A HIT!

OKAY, NOW WHAT WERE YOU SAYING ABOUT MY--

EDDIE! DO YOU FEEL IT?! IT WASN'T--

IT DIDN'T WORK. TOOK OUT AT LEAST A HUNDRED OF THEM, BUT IT DIDN'T EVEN ***SLOW THEM DOWN.*** OH MY GOD...

...BOMBS.

...HE CAN'T BE STOPPED.

ALL TEAMS, MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!

THIS IS NOT A DRILL, PEOPLE! THIS IS IT!

THIS IS--

THE KING STRIKES BACK

PETER GAVE US ACCESS TO THIS SAFE ROOM AFTER WE CAME CLEAN TO THE AVENGERS ABOUT KNULL.
SAID IT WAS BUILT FOR HIM BY SOMEONE NAMED EZEKIEL. SUPPOSEDLY IT CAN SURVIVE A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST.
I JUST PRAY IT CAN WITHSTAND WHAT'S COMING NOW...
DAD, PLEASE DON'T DO THIS. DON'T LEAVE ME IN HERE!
WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS. IT'S NOT UP FOR DISCUSSION. I HAVE TO--
I CAN HELP! YOU KNOW WHAT I CAN DO, DAD. I HAVE POWERS LIKE HIM!
MAYBE I CAN...I DON'T KNOW, MAYBE I CAN TAKE CONTROL OF THE HIVE, OR-- OR--
DYLAN, THAT'S ENOUGH!
I MADE YOU A PROMISE. I TOLD YOU I WOULD PROTECT YOU NO MATTER WHAT, SON. AND I...
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO HAVE THIS LIFE.
THIS IS MY FIGHT. THESE ARE MY MISTAKES.
YOU...
YOU DON'T DESERVE THE THINGS I'VE PASSED DOWN TO YOU.

I'M GOING TO END THIS.
NOW, PLEASE... THIS IS THE LAST THING I'LL ASK OF YOU.
STAY HERE.
AND IF ANYONE BESIDES ME OPENS THIS DOOR--
DAD...
PLEASE COME BACK.
PLEASE.
I LOVE YOU, SON.
KLANG
BROCK?
YEAH, CAP.
PLAN B.
...I KNOW.

PLAN B MEANS THINGS HAVE GONE TO @#$%.

IT MEANS KNULL AND HIS ARMIES OF DRAGONS HAVE BROKEN THE PERIMETER OF EARTH AND MAKE LANDFALL.

FIRST WAVE IS GROUND. CAP HAS ASSEMBLED AN EVACUATION TEAM OF STREET-LEVEL HEROES WITH A FOCUS ON ELECTRICITY-BASED POWERS.

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TO GO ON, BUT WE KNOW KNULL'S ONLY WEAKNESSES ARE LIGHTNING, COSMIC POWER AND MAYBE MAGIC...

...BUT WE'LL SEE.

THAT BEING SAID...WE'RE A LITTLE SHORT-STAFFED.

TONY! ANY WORD FROM ***THOR?***

IT'S...IT'S NOT LOOKING GOOD DOWN HERE.

THESE DRAGONS ARE EXPLODING INTO THE CITY! COVERING EVERYTHING IN SYMBIOTES! GIVE ME SOME GOOD NEWS!

*NOTHING YET. BUT OUR OTHER BIG GUN IS ENTERING ORBIT **NOW.** SHOULDN'T BE LONG.*

WE NEED BACKUP ***NOW,*** TONY!

IRON MAN, CAPTAIN...PLEASE EXCUSE THE INTRUSION INTO YOUR MINDS...

THIS IS CHARLES XAVIER. IF YOU REQUIRE BACKUP, PLEASE...STAND BY.

SECOND WAVE: WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK.

MY X-MEN HAVE ARRIVED.

SECOND WAVE IS AIR.

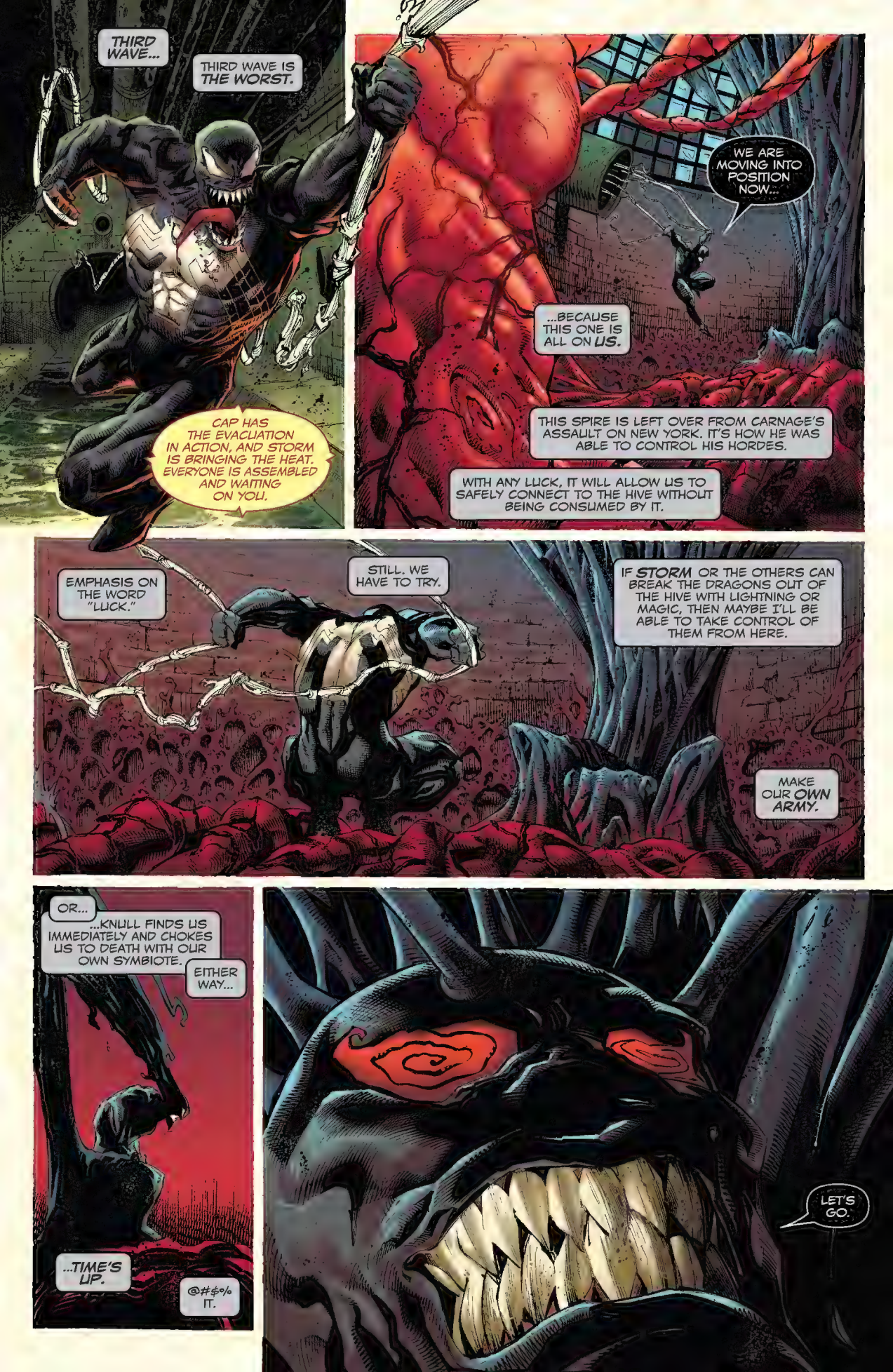
WE NEED TO SEVER THE CONNECTION KNULL HAS OVER HIS DRAGON HORDE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

I UNDERSTAND THOR'S ABSENCE IS A SIGNIFICANT HURDLE.

SURELY A GOD OF THUNDER WOULD BE HELPFUL. BUT... MAY I SUGGEST A GODDESS OF THE--

CHARLES, PLEASE...

I'M TRYING TO CONCENTRATE.


THIRD WAVE...
THIRD WAVE IS THE WORST.
CAP HAS THE EVACUATION IN ACTION, AND STORM IS BRINGING THE HEAT. EVERYONE IS ASSEMBLED AND WAITING ON YOU.
WE ARE MOVING INTO POSITION NOW...
...BECAUSE THIS ONE IS ALL ON US.
THIS SPIRE IS LEFT OVER FROM CARNAGE'S ASSAULT ON NEW YORK. IT'S HOW HE WAS ABLE TO CONTROL HIS HORDES.
WITH ANY LUCK, IT WILL ALLOW US TO SAFELY CONNECT TO THE HIVE WITHOUT BEING CONSUMED BY IT.
EMPHASIS ON THE WORD "LUCK."
STILL. WE HAVE TO TRY.
IF STORM OR THE OTHERS CAN BREAK THE DRAGONS OUT OF THE HIVE WITH LIGHTNING OR MAGIC, THEN MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEM FROM HERE.
MAKE OUR OWN ARMY.
OR...
...KNULL FINDS US IMMEDIATELY AND CHOKES US TO DEATH WITH OUR OWN SYMBIOTE.
EITHER WAY...
...TIME'S UP.
@#$%! IT.
LET'S GO.

THIS IS DOCTOR STRANGE BROADCASTING ON ALL RADIO, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL PLANES! IF YOU CAN HEAR MY VOICE, PLEASE COME IN!
THESE DRAGONS ARE UNLIKE ANY I HAVE FACED! THEY ARE BREAKING THROUGH MY BARRIERS AS FAST AS I CAN CAST THEM!
I CAN HEAR YOU! SEE YOU! STRANGE, HOLD ON! WE ARE ALMOST THROUGH TO THE CORE! I NEED MORE--
I CANNOT-- AGH!--HOLD THEM--BACK! PLEASE! CAN ANYONE--
DAMMIT, WE'RE LOSING STRANGE!
WE'RE LOSING, BROCK! WE NEED YOU TO GET IN RIGHT NOW!
NOW, EDDIE!
AGGGHH!!! I'M IN!!! I CAN SEE IT!
I CAN SEE IT, TONY. IT'S...
OH GOD...
OH GOD, RUN! RUN!!!
IT'S NOT JUST THE DRAGONS! IT'S NOT JUST KNULL!!!

WHAT--WHAT AM I **LOOKING** AT... I CAN'T...

TONY! CAN YOU HEAR ME? IT'S EDDIE! YOU HAVE TO GET OUT OF THERE!

THIS IS HOW IT **STARTED.** BEFORE THE SYMBIOTES... BEFORE THE DRAGONS...

KNULL'S FIRST ENEMIES WERE **THE CELESTIALS...**

...AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S SETTLED THE SCORE!

KRUNCH

AH...

I SEE MY REPUTATION PRECEDES ME...

...SO I WON'T WASTE YOUR TIME...

I AM GOING TO KILL YOUR WORLD.
IN THE MEANTIME, I AM LOOKING FOR A HUMAN NAMED BROCK.
SO BRING HIM TO ME, AND THIS CAN BE AS PAINLESS AND AS QUICK AS I AM CAPABLE.
THAT IS ALL.

OKAY, EVERYONE BACK! GET BACK!
ARE YOU CALLING A RETREAT?
TONY, THE GAME HAS CHANGED! WHERE THE HELL IS THE--
GETTING A LOCK ON HIM NOW! BE CAREFUL, KNULL'S RIGHT ON TOP OF--
WELL, LOOK AT THIS.
A WELCOMING PARTY FOR MY CORONATION.
HOW NICE...
AND WHO ARE YOU ALL SUPPOSED TO BE?
CAP! I HAVE A LOCK ON THE BIG GUN! HE'S INBOUND NOW!!! TEN SECONDS!!!
NORMALLY, WE'RE THE LAST THING GUYS LIKE YOU EVER SEE.
BUT TODAY?
WE'RE JUST HERE TO WATCH.
HE'S HERE AND AWAITING YOUR ORDERS, CAP. PERMISSION TO ENGAGE?
PERMISSION GRANTED.

GO INTRODUCE YOURSELF, SENTRY.
YES, SIR, CAPTAIN.
"IT WOULD BE MY PLEASURE."
BOOOOM
NO!!!
YOU! I'LL KILL YOU FOR--

HI.
MY NAME'S BOB.
YOU CAN CALL ME THE SENTRY. THIS WILL ALL BE OVER IN A--
OH, THERE'S NO NEED FOR ANY OF THAT...
MY HORDE HAS MEMORY OF YOU.
YOU ONCE KILLED THE ONE CALLED CARNAGE.
NOW...
...LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF...

OH MY GOD...HE'S GOING TO--

NGGHHH, NO...*THE VOID*... YOU'LL RELEASE HIM AND--

CHILD...

...I AM KNULL.

"LORD OF THE ABYSS.

SENTRY?! BOB!!!

GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES.

"THE DARKNESS INSIDE OF YOU?

THAT DARKNESS BOWS TO ME.

I AM THE VOID.

CAP! GET OUT OF THERE NOW! CAP, DO YOU HEAR ME? WE HAVE TO REGROUP! WE CAN'T WIN THIS RIGHT NOW!
WE ARE OUT OF OPTIONS, CAP! RUN!!!
TONY...
...THERE'S ALWAYS ONE MORE THING YOU CAN DO.
SECURE THE CITY. GET AS MANY PEOPLE CLEAR AS YOU CAN.
WE'LL HOLD THE LINE.
AVENGERS?
ASSEMB--
WAS THAT IT, THEN? YOUR DEFIANT LAST STAND?
I MUST SAY... I'M NOT TERRIBLY IMPRESSED. I HAD HOPED THE MIGHTY EARTH WOULD HAVE PROVEN MORE...WORTHY OF A BATTLE...
ALAS... YOU WILL FALL LIKE THE REST.
I HAVE MET YOUR ARMIES, LITTLE ONES.
MEET MINE.
THE GROUND! IT'S--
GUYS! HOLD ON, I CAN--
NO! GET OUT OF HERE, SPIDER-MAN! GET HELP!
CAP, PLEASE COME IN! I'M LOSING YOU.
THERE-- THAT'S MUCH BETTER.
NOW... LET'S MAKE SURE WE AREN'T INTERRUPTED FURTHER...
CAP? YOUR CONNECTION IS CUTTING OUT!!! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
STEVE!

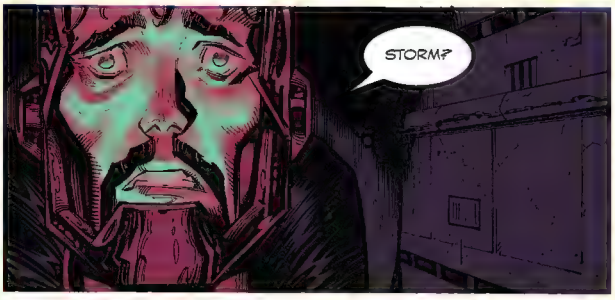
THIS SKY OF YOURS...
NO MORE DISTRACTIONS...
NO MORE OF YOUR SUN...
NO MORE STARS.
NO MORE LIGHT...
AH... YOU SEE?

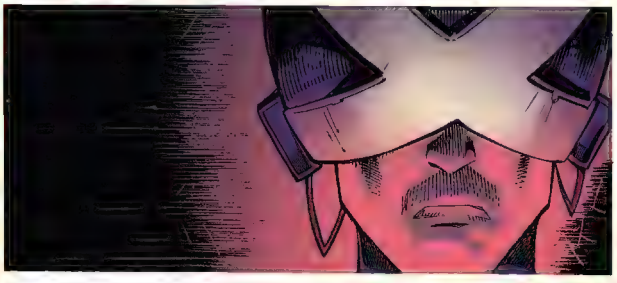
"ISN'T THIS SO MUCH BETTER?"

UM, CHARLES? TONY? CAN SOMEONE EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
KNULL...DEAR GOD! HE JUST COVERED THE ENTIRE EARTH IN A SYMBIOTIC DOME.
I'M GETTING REPORTS FROM WAKANDA, LATVERIA, JAPAN...IT'S... EVERYWHERE...
OKAY, SO...I NEED A PLAN HERE. I CAN'T KEEP THIS UP!
HMMM...
HELLO, LITTLE LIGHT...

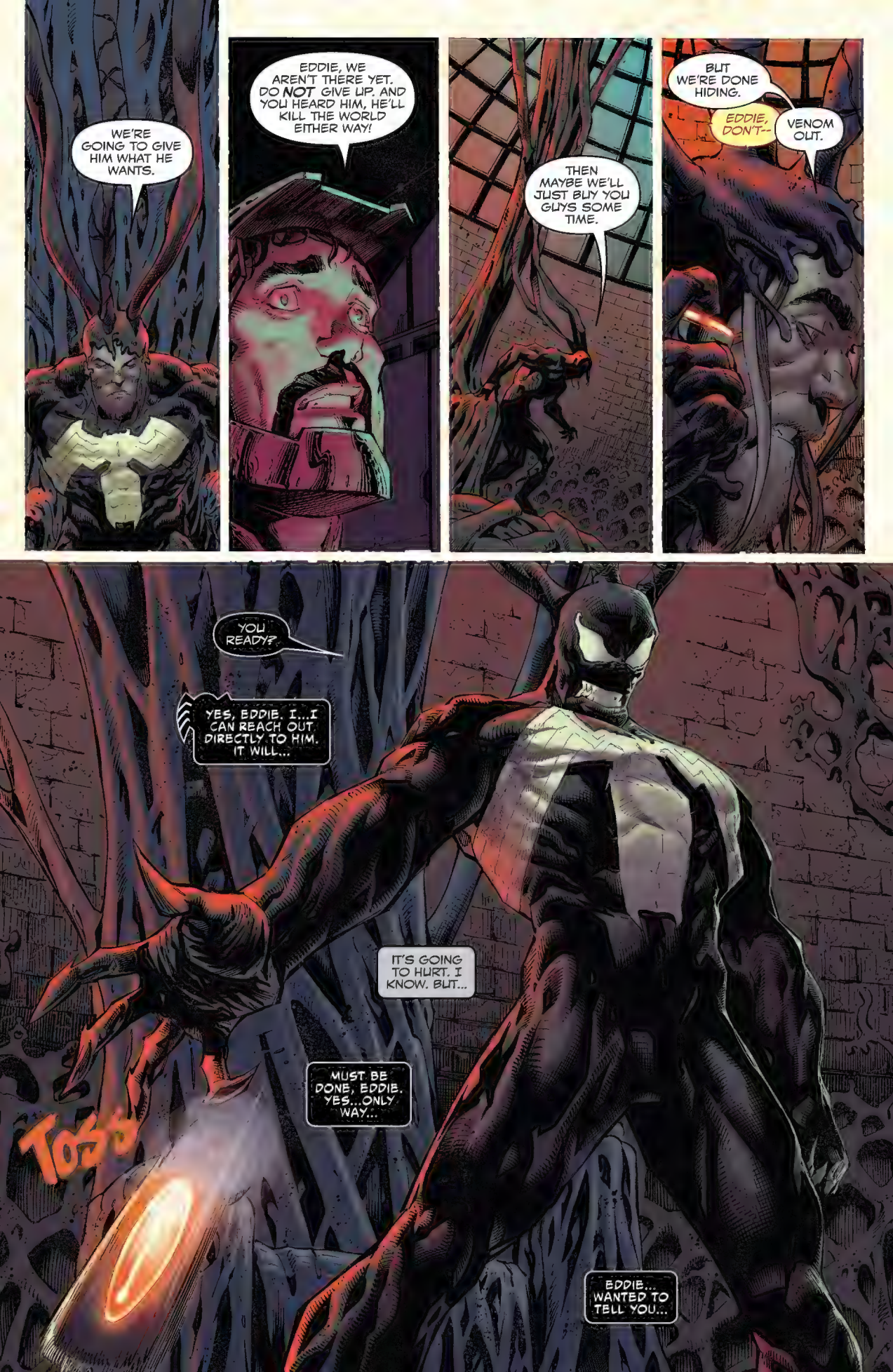
WE'RE...WE'RE WORKING ON IT. JUST STAY IN THE AIR UNTIL--
UNTIL WHAT, IRON MAN?! THIS IS STARTING TO FEEL--

--HOPELESS.


STORM?



EDDIE BROCK, I SWEAR TO GOD YOU TWO BETTER HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ME, OR I AM GOING TO--
WE KNOW. IT'S BAD.
BUT WE'RE GOING TO TRY SOMETHING.


WE'RE GOING TO GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS.
EDDIE, WE AREN'T THERE YET. DO NOT GIVE UP. AND YOU HEARD HIM, HE'LL KILL THE WORLD EITHER WAY!
THEN MAYBE WE'LL JUST BUY YOU GUYS SOME TIME.
BUT WE'RE DONE HIDING.
EDDIE, DON'T--
VENOM OUT.
YOU READY?
YES, EDDIE. I...I CAN REACH OUT DIRECTLY TO HIM. IT WILL...
IT'S GOING TO HURT. I KNOW. BUT...
MUST BE DONE, EDDIE. YES...ONLY WAY...
TOSS
EDDIE... WANTED TO TELL YOU...

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS...
WANTED TO MAKE SURE...YOU KNEW. THAT WE...THAT I--
YEAH...

I KNOW.

LAST DANCE, PARTNER.
YOU READY?
YES, EDDIE.
ALL RIGHT, THEN...

LET'S GO MEET OUR MAKER.

AH...

HELLO, LITTLE ONE...

I HEAR YOU CALLING...

RICH

COME TO ME...

JOIN US...

SHF

AGGGHHH!!

TOSS

LOOK AT WHAT WE HAVE CREATED...

SEE?
AGH!
DO YOU SEE HOW BEAUTIFUL THE DARK IS?
WITH STILL SO MUCH LIGHT TO KILL...BUT ALREADY...
P-PLEASE... JUST...JUST TAKE ME.
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. IT--
WAIT. I KNOW YOU...
YOU'RE THAT HOST WHO BEAT MY DRAGON... I THOUGHT I KILLED YOU...
HUH. MINDS ARE FUNNY THAT WAY, I SUPPOSE...
I DO APOLOGIZE. THERE'S BEEN A BIT OF CONFUSION...
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? YOU SAID--
MY FAULT, REALLY...
I SHOULD HAVE SPECIFIED WHICH BROCK.

N-NO!!! NO, IT'S US YOU WANT! WE BEAT YOU, YOU SON OF A #$E%@! YOUR FIGHT IS WITH US!!!

LEAVE MY SON ALONE!!!

PLEASE! TAKE ME!

HMMM...

NO.

AGHHHH!!!

I WILL TAKE MY CHILD FROM YOU...

...AND THEN I WILL TAKE YOURS.

BUT I'M AFRAID I DON'T HAVE MUCH USE FOR YOU, HOST.

NO, PLEASE! PLEASE DON'T--

SHRIEK

KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
PEACH MOMOKO

KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
SUPERLOG

KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
DONNY CATES

KING IN BLACK #1 SECRET VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN

KING IN BLACK #2

FALL

SMASH

EDDIE!!!
OH MY GOD.
NO. NO, EDDIE, I COULDN'T... I C-COULDN'T GET TO YOU. THERE WERE TOO MANY...
EDDIE, PLEASE! TALK TO ME! I DON'T... I DON'T KNOW WHAT...
HELP!
PLEASE! I NEED HELP!!! ANYONE?! IS THERE--
P-PETE...
DYLAN.
P-PROMISE ME...Y-YOU...

SIGH
HONESTLY, HOW HARD IS IT TO KILL ONE MAN?
AGHHHH!!
I KNOW IT HURTS, BUT WE GOTTA GET YOU HELP. THERE'S NO ONE ELSE. KNULL... HE TOOK THEM. HE KILLED THEM, EDDIE! NOW, COME ON, WE GOTTA--
AGH! SPIDER-SENSE! GET--
ZZAKK
--DOWN!
OH GOD...
HE DIDN'T KILL THEM...

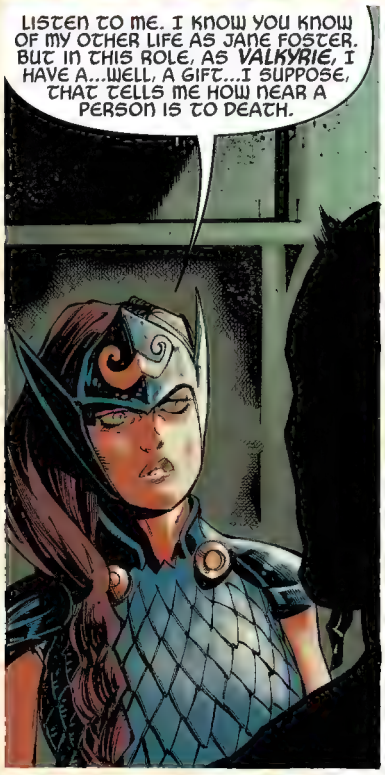
...HE MADE THEM HIS ARMY.
AGH!
OKAY... WE--WE GOTTA GO! WE CAN'T FACE THEM, AND NO ONE ELSE IS...
...COMING?

TORCH!!!
HIYA, SPIDEY.
GET EDDIE HELP, TAKE HIM TO THE FF LAB.
I GOT THIS.
FIRE DOESN'T HURT THEM THE SAME WAY, JOHNNY!
DON'T BE STUPID! COME WITH US AND--
GOOD. THEN MY NOVA BLAST WON'T HURT THE PEOPLE TRAPPED INSIDE.
BUT IT'LL GIVE YOU ENOUGH TIME TO GET OUT OF HERE.
JOHNNY, YOU CAN'T! YOU'LL PASS OUT AFTERWARD, AND THEY'LL TAKE YOU TOO--
I KNOW.
SO HEY, PETE. DO ME A FAVOR AND TELL EVERYONE I SAID SOMETHING COOL AND HEROIC BEFORE I FELL, YEAH?

"I KINDA HAVE A REPUTATION TO MAINTAIN."

SO I'VE HEARD THE FRANKLY *DIRE* DIAGNOSES. YOU'VE TOLD ME EVERYTHING THAT'S FRACTURED AND BROKEN AND SHATTERED AND RUPTURED AND DISLOCATED...

THE HOME BASE AND LABORATORY OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
...NOW'S THE PART WHEN YOU TELL ME HOW WE FIX HIM, RIGHT, DOC?
DOC?


LISTEN TO ME. I KNOW YOU KNOW OF MY OTHER LIFE AS JANE FOSTER. BUT IN THIS ROLE, AS *VALKYRIE*, I HAVE A...WELL, A GIFT...I SUPPOSE, THAT TELLS ME HOW NEAR A PERSON IS TO DEATH.

AND WHILE I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW WE CAN FIX YOUR FRIEND...

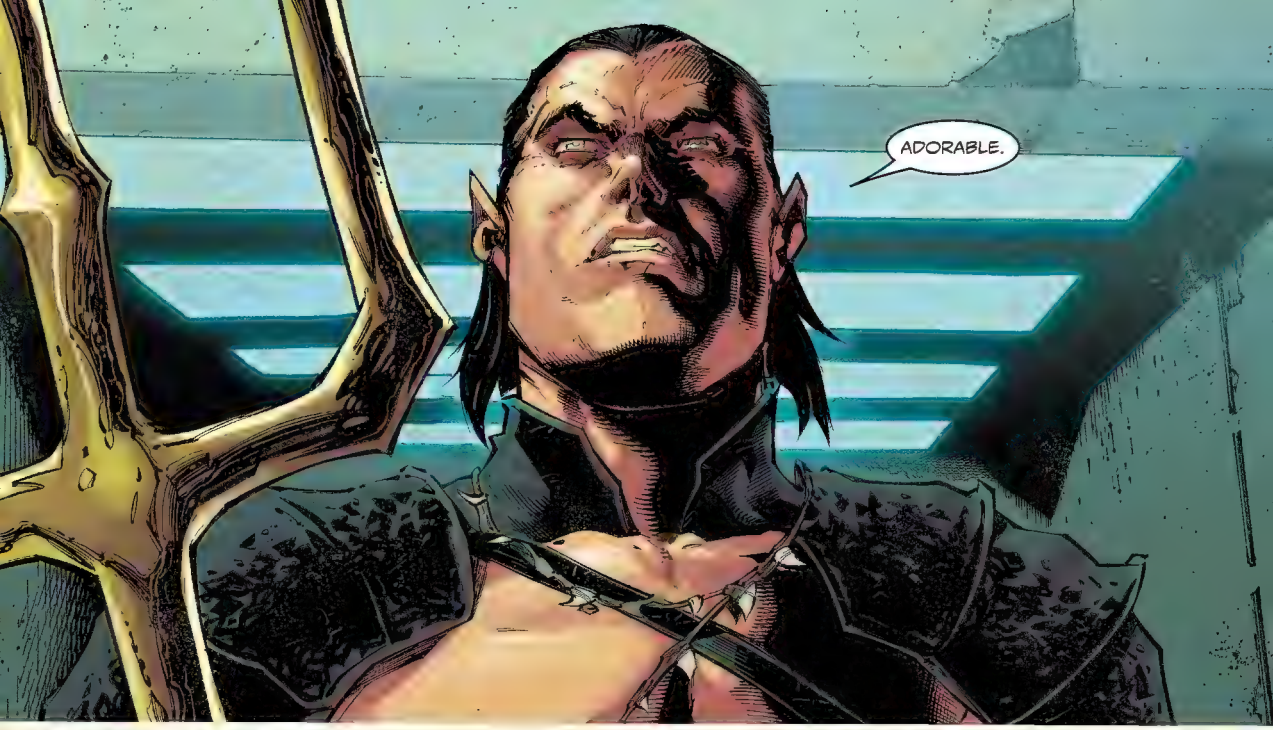
...I WILL TELL YOU THAT WE NEED TO *HURRY.*

OKAY...WELL, JUST--I DON'T KNOW... DO WHAT YOU CAN...
I'M SORRY, BUT I CANNOT STAY. I WILL SOON BE NEEDED ELSEWHERE... THE *SENTRY'S SOUL.* IT IS MY DUTY TO--
YEAH...WELL, I HAVE A JOB TO DO TOO. LET'S JUST HOPE WE BOTH COME BACK TO SOME GOOD NEWS...

"...BECAUSE I'M SURE AS HELL GOING TO NEED IT."
CHUK

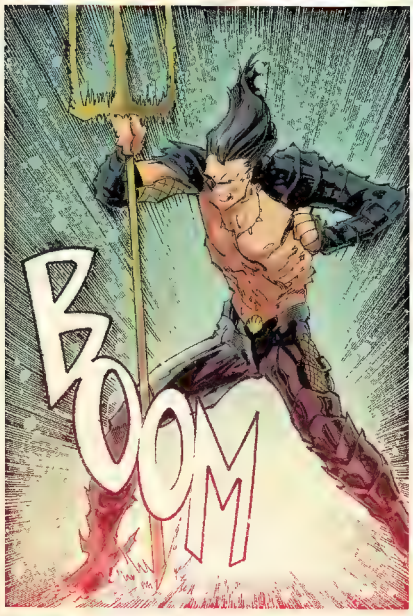
HEY... DYLAN. SO LISTEN.
I NEED YOU TO GET PACKED. I'LL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY, BUT--
I HAVE TO GET YOU--
IS HE DEAD?
IS MY DAD DEAD?
NOT...
NOT WHEN I LEFT HIM. NO. BUT...
YOU NEED TO COME WITH ME, BUDDY.

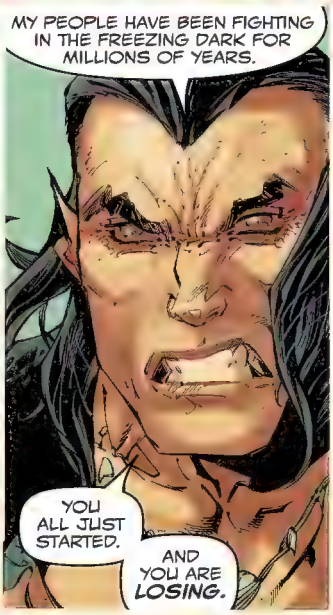
HOLY @#$%.
WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE. BUT... YEAH...
...AGREED.
COULSON IS ALREADY REACHING OUT TO ENLIST THE SQUADRON AND DOCTOR SPECTRUM. SO WE HAVE THAT MOVING INTO--
WHERE THE HELL IS *THOR?* HAS ANYONE--
NOTHING YET. I MEAN, THAT I KNOW OF.
LISTEN. WE HAVE NOTHING BUT MORE BODIES FOR KNULL AND HIS ARMIES UNLESS THE *X-MEN*--
WE HAVE ALREADY LOST TOO MANY OF OUR KIND HELPING YOU, BLADE. NOW, WE CAN HELP FORMULATE A PLAN TOGETHER, BUT--
ARE YOU INSANE? YOU KNOW HOW MANY PEOPLE YOU COULD SAVE IF YOU JUST OPENED YOUR GATES AND--
LEAD AN INFINITE ARMY OF DARKNESS INTO OUR LANDS?! TO OPEN OUR BORDERS SO THAT OUR PEOPLE CAN--
THERE IS NO "YOUR PEOPLE" ANYMORE, MAGNETO! THIS THING IS COMING FOR EVERYONE!
HEY. UM.
QUICK QUESTION...
NOT TO INTERRUPT YOUR BIG, SUPER-SECRET MEETING BUT...
IS THERE ANY NEWS ON EDDIE?
IS HE... IS HE GOING TO BE OKAY?
NO.
NO CHANGE. BUT...WE'RE WORKING ON IT. WE ARE STILL VERY MUCH UNDER ATTACK, AND IF WE CANNOT GET THIS SPREAD UNDER CONTROL WE WON'T BE ABLE TO--
ON THAT NOTE...
OBVIOUSLY YOU WILL HAVE THE FULL MIGHT OF WAKANDA AT YOUR BACK...
...BUT WHAT OF THE INFINITY STONES? THE COSMIC CUBE? THE ULTIMATE NULLIFIER? WHAT DO WE HAVE ON HAND THAT COULD--
WHOA... HEY, ARE WE REALLY DISCUSSING BRINGING THIS KIND OF FIREPOWER ONTO THE BOARD? I MEAN, THIS IS JUST *ONE GUY.*
HE WAS THE FIRST BEING BORN IN THE VOID.
HE'S KILLED CELESTIALS. HE KILLED *THE SENTRY* AND NOW HE'S TAKEN ALMOST ALL THE AVENGERS AND DROWNED THE WORLD IN DARKNESS...
SO YES, I THINK WE SHOULD TAKE THE KING OF THE ABYSS SERIOUSLY.
THE "KING OF THE ABYSS," EH?


ADORABLE.

-SIGH-
MAN, WHO INVITED NAMOR?

SUE?
GET PAST IT. WE NEED HELP.
CAN...WE SPEAK IN PRIVATE FOR A--

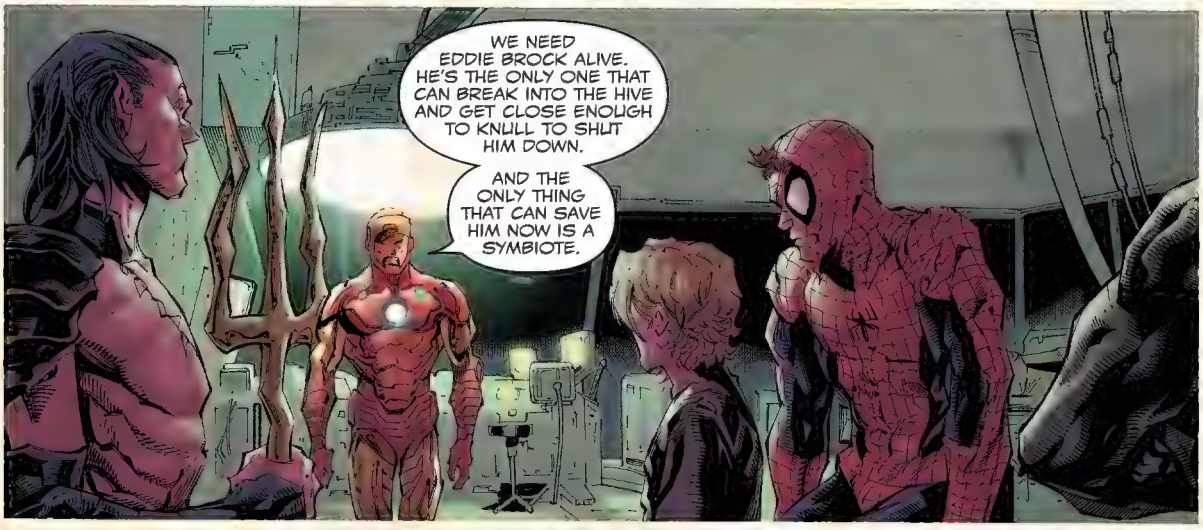

BOOM


MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING IN THE FREEZING DARK FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS.
YOU ALL JUST STARTED.
AND YOU ARE LOSING.

THE MAJORITY OF THIS PLANET BELONGS TO ME. SO IF THIS KING WANTS A WAR, HE WILL HAVE ONE.
I AM HERE. MY PEOPLE ARE HERE. WE WILL FIGHT.
NOW, DO ANY OF THE ADULTS IN THE ROOM ACTUALLY HAVE ANYTHING TO OFFER IN THE WAY OF A PLAN?

I DO.

YOU'RE GOING TO HATE IT.
AND IT'S INSANE.
AND I'M GOING TO NEED A DRAGON.


WE NEED EDDIE BROCK ALIVE. HE'S THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN BREAK INTO THE HIVE AND GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO KNULL TO SHUT HIM DOWN.
AND THE ONLY THING THAT CAN SAVE HIM NOW IS A SYMBIOTE.

SO I'M GOING TO GET US ONE.

OKAY, I FOLLOW, BUT AREN'T THERE A MILLION OF THOSE THINGS? WHY DO YOU NEED ONE OF THE DRAGONS?
DYLAN, ISN'T YOUR CAT A SYMBIOTE?
THE DRAGONS ARE STRONGER. REMEMBER WHEN CARNAGE BONDED TO ONE? HE WAS ALMOST INVULNERABLE...
IRON MAN, IF YOU CAN CONTROL ONE, IF YOU CAN BOND IT TO MY DAD...

EXACTLY.
AND IN THE MEANTIME...I HAVE A FEW OTHER IDEAS...

THE BOTTOM OF THE MARIANA TRENCH.

ONE: NAMOR IS GOING TO GO WAKE UP SOME OF HIS OLD BUDDIES THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW I KNEW ABOUT.

WHAT ARE THEY CALLED AGAIN? THE BLACK TIDE?

I DIDN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN CURSED BY ANCIENT ATLANTEAN MAGIC, ANTHONY. AND ONCE THEY ARE AWAKE, IT WILL BE **HELL** TO BANISH THEM AGAIN.

AND WE'LL FIGHT **THAT** WAR WHEN WE GET TO IT. BUT YOU AND YOUR ATLANTEAN SOLDIERS JUST AREN'T GOING TO CUT IT HERE.

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, BIG GUY...

...WE NEED AN ARMY THAT CAN FIGHT IN THE DARK.

CHERNOBYL, UKRAINE.

SPEAKING OF WHICH... BLADE?

HOW'S IT GOING WITH THE FANG BRIGADE?

OH, THEY'RE VERY COOPERATIVE.

EAGER, ONE MIGHT SAY...

WOULDN'T YOU AGREE...

...DRACULA?

THE BAR WITH NO NAME.

OKAY, GUYS. THIS LAST ONE IS GONNA STING...

...BUT HAS ANYONE GOTTEN ON THE LINE WITH OUR DULY ELECTED **MAYOR?**

LOOK, I HEAR YA, LOOT. SEEMS LIKE THIS #$%& HAPPENS ALL THE TIME NOW. IT'S JUST...I DON'T KNOW, MAN. FEELS **REALLY** BAD THIS TIME.

UGH. REMEMBER WHEN THE HEROES JUST ALL FOUGHT **EACH OTHER?** THOSE WERE THE DAYS, MAN...

LADIES. GENTLEMEN...

TSS

...WHO WANTS TO MAKE SOME MONEY?

WE'RE WORKING ON IT HERE, TONY. WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?

LIKE I SAID, REED, PRIORITY NUMBER ONE IS GETTING BROCK BACK IN THE FIGHT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS, BUT IF WE'RE GOING TO STAND A CHANCE OUT HERE...

...WE'RE GOING TO NEED VENOM.

CHOMP

TONY?! TONY, I'M LOSING YOU!

I'M HERE! I HAVE TO BREAK THIS THING'S CONNECTION TO ITS HIVE.

ESSENTIALLY, I HAVE TO REWRITE ITS DNA. BREAK IT DOWN AND REBUILD IT SIMULTANEOUSLY.

LUCKILY...

PSSH

THAT'S EXACTLY WHY I INVENTED EXTREMIS.

REEEE!

IT--IT'S WORKING! IT'S-- IT'S TALKING TO ME! WAKING UP!

I'M--I'M ALMOST THROUGH! DAMMIT--REED, THIS IS--

TONY?!

--TOO MUCH! MILLIONS OF VOICES! ALL OF THEM...IN...SO MUCH PAIN! I--I CAN SEE IT ALL!!! IT'S--

--ME, DAD. IT'S DYLAN...
CAN... CAN YOU HEAR ME?
HEY... YOU DOING OKAY?
...NO. I JUST... I WISH I COULD HAVE...DONE SOMETHING...
THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE, DYLAN.
THAT'S NOT TRUE. I HAVE--
MOVE!
IRON MAN!
I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE FOR KNULL TO OVERWHELM MY REPROGRAMMING, BUT I DID IT.
I GOT ONE.
AND GOD HELP ME, I COULD USE A WIN ABOUT--
WAIT. NO. SOMETHING IS WRONG. DON'T--
--NOW?!
AGHH!
HIS VITALS ARE SPIKING! TONY, WE HAVE TO GET IT OFF OF HIM NOW!
WHAT? NO, THAT SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE. I-- I SEVERED THE CONNECTION. HE CAN'T...
KNULL CAN'T BE THAT STRONG.
MOVE! EVERYONE, MOVE! PLEASE--
SOMEBODY HELP ME, DAMMIT! IT'S KILLING HIM!
HEY!

I SAID MOVE!!!
VWAAAAAMMMMM
THAT WAS... DYLAN...YOU HAVE POWERS?
YOU--YOU ATOMIZED IT WITH... WITH A--A THOUGHT... DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
DYLAN, YOU--YOU'RE OUR SECRET WEAPON!
DON'T YOU SEE? WITH YOUR POWER, WE CAN SAVE OUR FRIENDS-- AND THE WORLD!
DYLAN, YOU ARE INCREDIBLE! THIS IS... MY GOD, THIS IS--
WHAT IS THAT?
REED...
WHAT IS THAT NOISE?
REED, DAMMIT, STOP!
WHAT?! I WAS SIMPLY--
HONEY, LOOK...
EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

OH...
OH, DEAR GOD...
EEEEEEEEEEEEEE
...DAD?

KING IN BLACK #1 LAUNCH VARIANT BY
PHILIP TAN & SEBASTIAN CHENG

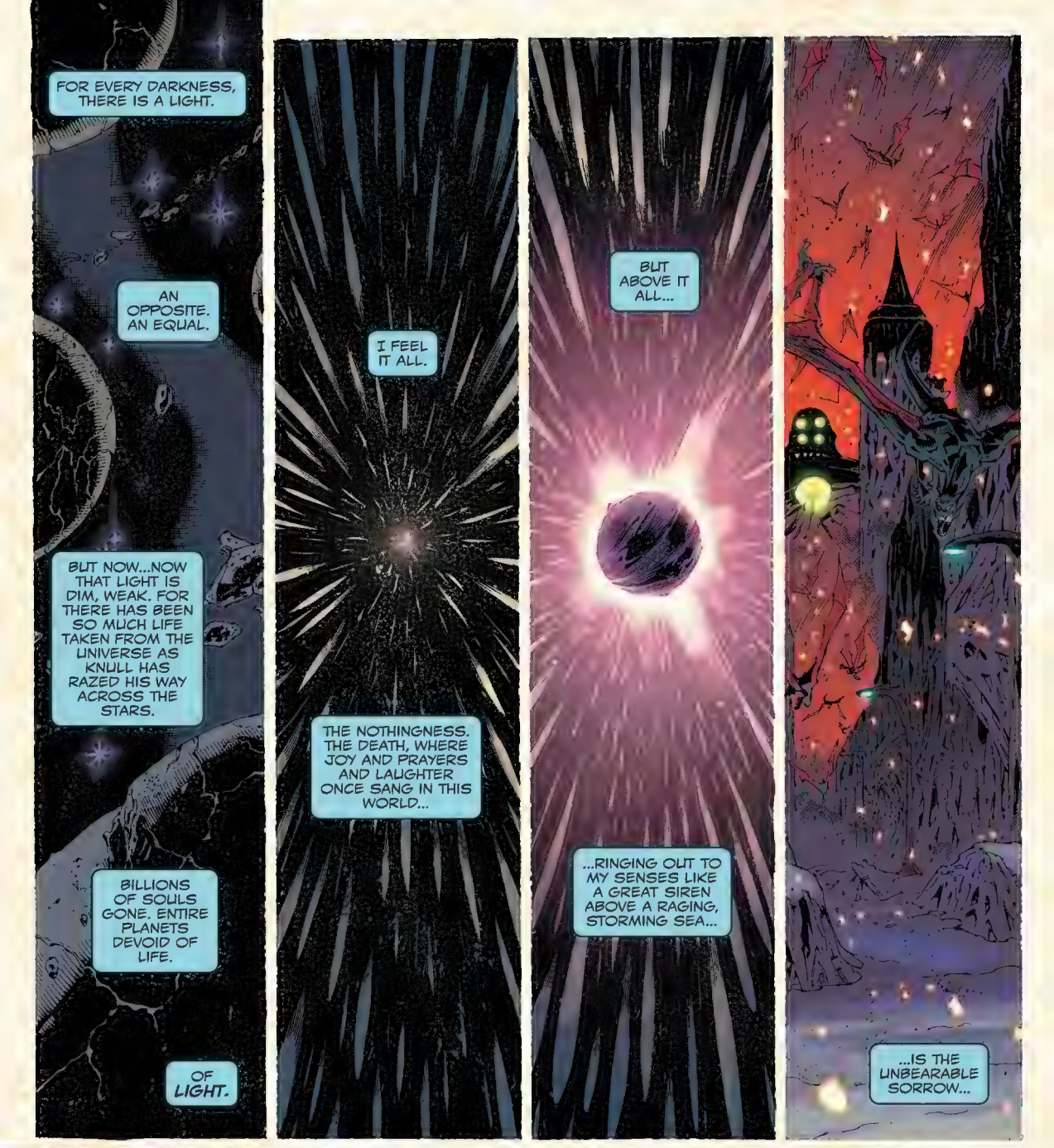
KING IN BLACK #3 TATTOO VARIANT BY
IAN DEDERMAN

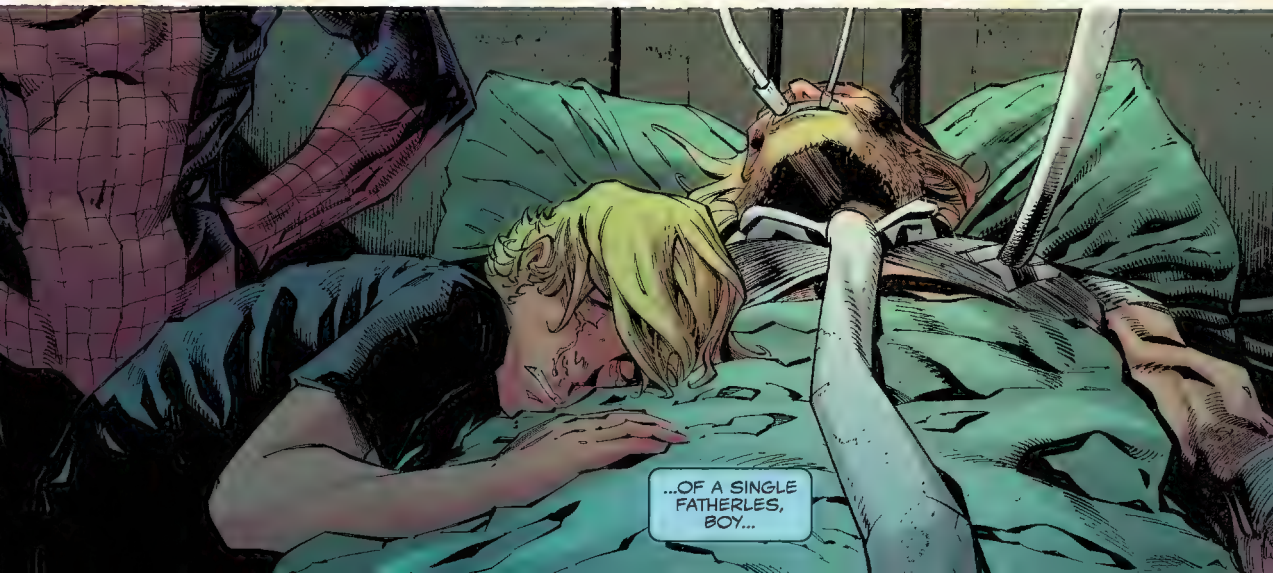
KING IN BLACK #1 SPOILER VARIANT BY
TAURIN CLARKE

KING IN BLACK #3 DRAGON VARIANT BY
IBAN COELLO & JESUS ABURTOV

KING IN BLACK #3

THUNDER


FOR EVERY DARKNESS, THERE IS A LIGHT.
AN OPPOSITE. AN EQUAL.
BUT NOW...NOW THAT LIGHT IS DIM, WEAK. FOR THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH LIFE TAKEN FROM THE UNIVERSE AS KNULL HAS RAZED HIS WAY ACROSS THE STARS.
BILLIONS OF SOULS GONE. ENTIRE PLANETS DEVOID OF LIFE.
OF LIGHT.
I FEEL IT ALL.
THE NOTHINGNESS. THE DEATH, WHERE JOY AND PRAYERS AND LAUGHTER ONCE SANG IN THIS WORLD...
BUT ABOVE IT ALL...
...RINGING OUT TO MY SENSES LIKE A GREAT SIREN ABOVE A RAGING, STORMING SEA...
...IS THE UNBEARABLE SORROW...


...OF A SINGLE FATHERLESS, BOY...

...SURROUNDED BY A ROAR OF DEATH, ECHOING ACROSS THE BLACK CANYONS OF A CHOKING WORLD.
REED! WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ***NOW*** IF WE'RE GOING TO DO IT! THERE'RE ONLY SO MANY OF THESE THINGS THAT BLADE AND HIS VAMPIRE ARMY CAN HOLD BACK!
I CAN'T KEEP THESE SHIELDS UP FOREVER! WHAT IS--
THOK
INCREDIBLE. I RECOVERED THIS DRIVE GIVEN TO EDDIE FROM A MAN NAMED WRAITH.* THIS INFORMATION IS ENCRYPTED BEYOND ANYTHING I'VE SEEN, BUT IT SEEMS TO LINE UP WITH WHERE DYLAN'S ENERGY COMES FROM...
IT'S AS IF IT'S..***PULLING*** FROM SOMETHING. SOMETHING NOT FROM THIS WORLD. ITS SIGNATURE IS FAMILIAR SOMEHOW, BUT I CAN'T--
*BACK IN WEB OF VENOM: WRAITH! --EDITOR
REED!!! NOW!
RIGHT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS. IF YOU SAY NO, I PROMISE I WILL SUPPORT YOU IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO OUT THERE.
OKAY. IT'S TIME. WE ALL HAVE OUR MISSIONS. ABOVE ALL, PROTECT DYLAN.
WOLVERINE AND SPIDER-MAN WILL ESCORT DYLAN OUT ALONG WITH BLADE AND THE VAMPIRES AFTER I BLOW THE DOORS OPEN.
HE'S THE KEY TO FREEING OUR ALLIES AND THEN...THE WORLD.
I'VE GIVEN YOU ALL COMMS EARPIECES. ,BUT XAVIER? SHOULD... YANCY STREET FALL?
YES. I WILL KEEP US ALL CONNECTED.
OKAY, THEN...
EVERYONE... READY?
HEY... DO YOU NEED A--
I NEED...
...TO HURT SOMETHING.

BOOM

EVERYONE ON ME. REMEMBER, MOST OF THESE THINGS ARE INNOCENT PEOPLE TRAPPED INSIDE, BUT UNTIL DYLAN CAN FREE THEM AND GET THEM TO SAFETY--

WAY AHEAD OF YA, WEB-HEAD...

FWOOM

TAKE 'EM DOWN!

YOU THINK YOU CAN DEFEAT ME, BOY?! YOU ARE *NOTHING* COMPARED TO US! WE WILL DEVOUR THIS PLANET!

AND NOTHING WILL STOP US!

SORRY, CAP...

FWOOSH

...GONNA NEED TO BORROW THIS.

CAFH

RAGHHH!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE, KNULL.
I KNOW YOU'RE CONNECTED TO CAP.
I HOPE YOU CAN FEEL THIS!
AND I HOPE IT HURTS!
AGH!
AH, I SEE... FINALLY...
THERE YOU ARE, CHILD.

UH... GUYS?
I THINK I PISSED HIM OFF!
-:KAFFKAFF:-
W-WHERE...
DYLAN?
WHAT...WHAT IS GOING ON? WHERE HAVE I--
IT'S HIM! I CAN'T--I CAN'T PUSH HIM BACK!
I'M SORRY!!!
AGH!
NO! THAT...THAT POWER... FAMILIAR... BUT...BUT HOW?!
WHA... WHO COULD...

IT'S CALLED LIGHTNING.
YOU WOULD DO WELL TO BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO IT, VILLAIN.
YOU MUST BE DYLAN. I AM THOR.
HOW MAY I BE OF SERVICE?
JUST HAVE MY BACK. I CAN DO THIS.
LITTLE THUNDER WOULD HELP TOO.
AYE. THAT...I CAN PROVIDE.

FOR EVERY DARKNESS, THERE IS A LIGHT.
AN OPPOSITE. AN EQUAL.
THEY BATTLE, THOR AND THE CHILD OF VENOM.
I CAN FEEL THEM AS I RACE NEARER.
I CAN FEEL THEM, BEATING THE DARKNESS BACK WITH EVERY BREATH IN THEIR LUNGS...
KNOWING THAT THEY WILL FALL.
THAT THEY WILL LOSE.
AND THERE... LORDING OVER ALL OF IT...
KNULL.
BLEEDING WITH EVERY BLOW DEALT BY THESE TWO WARRIORS OF THE LIGHT...

BOOM
AND YET...
YOU!!!
...THE VOID KING RISES ONCE MORE.
DYLAN...
BEHIND ME...
SO YOU'VE FINALLY DECIDED TO SHOW YOUR FACE AND STOP HIDING, AYE?
YOU'RE THE ONE THEY CALL KNULL, YES? I RECALL HALF-DRUNKENLY KILLING ONE OF YOUR DRAGON PETS ONCE.
YES. I REMEMBER. BUT YOU...LITTLE GOD...
YOU KILLED ONE OF MY CHILDREN...BUT YOU HAVE NEVER FACED ME. NEVER FACED ANYTHING LIKE ME.
I AM THE GOD OF THE VOID. KING OF THE ABYSS. I AM--
QUIET. I AM THE LAST PERSON YOU WILL EVER IMPRESS WITH YOUR PITIFUL TITLES, SO YOU MAY AS WELL STOP NOW.
SO YOU'RE A GOD...AND A KING.
GOOD FOR YOU.

NOW, ALLOW ME TO TEACH YOU WHAT THOSE WORDS TRULY MEAN.
HA!
HGN!
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU CAN TEACH ME ANYTHING...
SKRIP
...BUT I WILL TEACH YOU, LITTLE GOD.
WHUMP
TODAY, YOU LEARN TO DIE.
NO! THOR!
DYLAN-- NO... RUN!
WOOOM
GET OFF OF HIM, YOU--
SILENCE, BOY!

I'VE HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF YOUR INSOLENCE.
N-NO!
WHUD
I WANT YOU TO SEE...
...SEE YOUR HEROES FLAIL AND DIE.
WATCH AS THEY ARE CONSUMED BY MY HORDES...
...JUST AS YOU SHALL BE.
N-NO!!! GET OFF!!!
I--I CAN'T CONTROL THEM!
THERE'RE... TOO MANY...
I...
KRAK
GET. OFF!
HA!
...I'M SORRY...

DON'T YOU SEE? THIS WORLD... IS MINE.
YOU CANNOT STOP ME.
NAY!
MIDGARD IS UNDER MY PROTECTION, AS ARE ALL THE REALMS OF THE WORLD ASH!
I HAVE KILLED HUNDREDS LIKE YOU!!! ALL OF THEM CLAIMED TO BE THE ONE TRUE DEATH!
THE LIVING VOID! THE END!
TO THAT I SAY, I AM KING THOR ODINSON, GOD OF LIGHTNING AND THUNDER AND PROTECTOR OF EVERY REALM IN THIS GALAXY!!!
I SAY WHEN IT ENDS--

--AND I HAVE HAD
ENOUGH!!!
KRAKKA-
DOOMM

YOU--
YOUR... WORLD WILL BURN FOR... THAT...
NO!
VWAAAA
VWAAAA
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, LOOK TO THE SKIES!
EVERYONE, READY YOURSELVES!
KNULL HAS AWOKEN THE CELESTIALS!!!
IRON MAN, THOR, WHO-- WHOEVER IS AVAILABLE, I NEED YOU IN THE--
I HEAR YOU! I AM ON MY WAY!
EVERYONE...
GRAB
EVERYONE WILL BURN...

BBBBWWAAAAAAAAAAAAA
SPLITCH
AGHHH!!!
...AND YOU WILL WATCH.
YOU KNOW THE PAIN OF ALL-BLACK, DON'T YOU?
WELL...NOW YOU'VE HAD THE HONOR OF BEING KILLED BY ITS CREATOR.
DAMMIT! ANYONE! CAN ANYONE READ ME? WE NEED A PLAN!!! WE'VE LOST THOR, AND THOSE THINGS ARE GOING TO--
REED, CALM DOWN. THIS IS TONY. I'VE GOT THIS.
SOMEONE NEEDS TO GET THAT KID OUT OF THERE RIGHT NOW THOUGH!
YOU--YOU'VE GOT THIS? HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO FIGHT TWO CELESTIALS, TONY?

YOU REMEMBER THAT EXTREMIS-INFECTED SYMBIOTE I GOT AHOLD OF?
SLASH
WELL, SINCE THE KID FREED IT FROM ITS HIVE... WE'VE BEEN GETTING ALONG A LITTLE BETTER.
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND... SO YOU HAVE A DRAGON, I DON'T---
THAT'S BECAUSE IT'S **NOT** A DRAGON.
IT'S WHATEVER I WANT IT TO BE. SO HOW AM I GONNA BEAT TWO CELESTIALS?
I'M NOT.
I'M GOING TO USE THIS DRAGON TO OVERRIDE ONE OF THEM AND MAKE IT MY NEW FAVORITE ARMOR...
...AND THEN?
WELL, **MR. FANTASTIC.** YOU EVER PLAY ROCK 'EM SOCK 'EM ROBOTS?

FOR EVERY DARKNESS, THERE IS A LIGHT.

AN OPPOSITE.

CLANG

AN EQUAL.

I AM THE ONLY FAMILY YOU HAVE NOW.

COME WITH ME. LET US TALK...

...MY SON.

NO!

THERE IS ANOTHER. AN OPPOSITE OF KNULL. A GOD OF LIGHT. *THE SOURCE OF DYLAN'S POWER...*

HUGINN, MUNINN...SWIFTLY... *FIND HIM!*

BUT WHILE KNULL'S DOME STILL STANDS, IT CANNOT BREAK THROUGH.

BUT I...

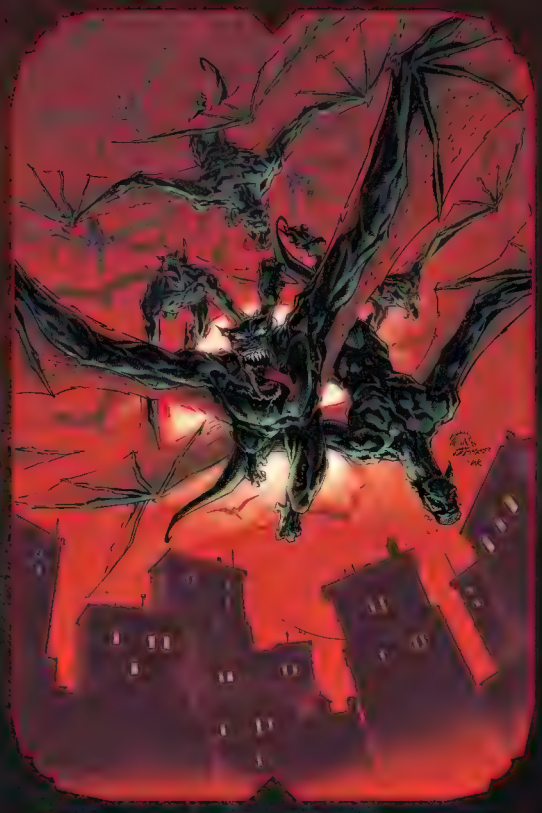
I CAN...

NOW THEN...DYLAN BROCK.

THE CHILD OF MY CHILDREN.

DO NOT BE AFRAID.

...AND I AM ON MY WAY.



KING IN BLACK #1 DARKNESS REIGNS VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN

KING IN BLACK #2 TATTOO VARIANT BY
IAN DEDERMAN

KING IN BLACK #2 SPOILER VARIANT BY
DECLAN SHALVEY

KING IN BLACK #[illegible] DRAGON VARIANT BY
JOSHUA CASSARA & DEAN WHITE

KING IN BLACK #4

LIGHTNING

DYLAN.
WAKE UP, CHILD.
DYLAN.
IT IS TIME...
DYLAN.
DO NOT BE AFRAID...
DYLAN.
IT IS TIME.

DYLAN. DYLAN, LISTEN TO ME...
S-STOP IT! GET OUT OF MY HEAD!
CALM YOURSELF, CHILD. I AM NOT HERE TO HURT YOU...
DYLAN... REMAIN CALM. LISTEN TO ME...
YOU...
MY HIVE. MY...REBELLIOUS CHILDREN...
YOU ARE SPECIAL. SOMETHING NEW.
THEY MADE YOU TO DESTROY ME.
DYLAN... CAN YOU HEAR ME?
I CAN HEAR YOU. WAIT...WHO ARE YOU?
BUT... AS YOU CAN SEE...
...THAT WILL NOT COME TO PASS. YOUR CHAMPIONS HAVE FALLEN. THIS PLANET IS MINE. AND YOU...
...YOU HAVE FAILED.
I'M A FRIEND. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN HOLD THIS CONNECTION OPEN, BUT I NEED YOU TO LISTEN TO ME. I CAN GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
KNULL HAS MADE A MISTAKE BRINGING YOU HERE. YOU CAN USE HIM. USE YOUR POWERS TO BREAK INTO HIS HIVE.
BUT YOU NEED NOT DIE HERE LIKE THE REST.
YOU ARE SPECIAL TO ME.
YOU ARE...IN MANY WAYS...
DYLAN?!
...MY SON.

YOU CAN DO THIS! FOCUS. LISTEN TO ME. YOU CAN TAP INTO HIS POWERS WITH YOURS.
YOU CAN USE HIM AS AN ANTENNA TO CONTROL--
SHUT UP!!!
I WILL GIVE YOU THE DARKNESS. TOGETHER WE WILL END THIS WAR.
JOIN ME...
...OR I WILL BURN THIS WORLD TO THE GROUND.
YES...
THAT'S A GOOD BOY.
YOU...
I'VE GOT THIS.
...KILLED MY DAD.

AGHHHH!

YES! DYLAN, QUICKLY! NOW REACH OUT **THROUGH** HIM!

THROUGH **THE HIVE MIND!**

YES! YOU'RE DOING IT! YOU'RE FREEING THEM!

I KNOW IT HURTS!

AGHH!!! IT'S--IT'S TOO MUCH!

KEEP GOING! KEEP PUSHING!

NGH! I CAN'T...

JUST A FEW MORE TO GO! WE ONLY GET ONE SHOT AT THIS!

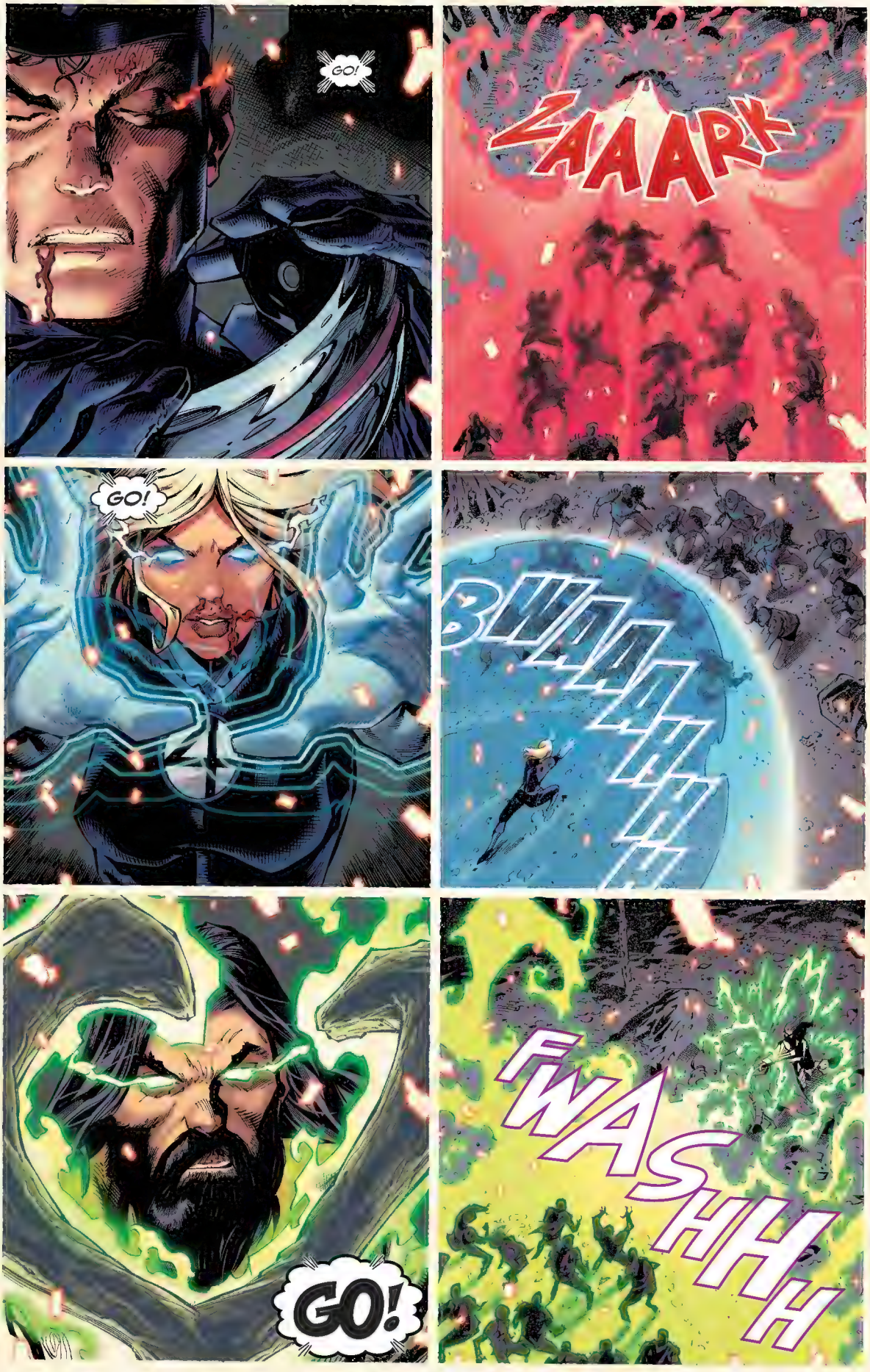
HOLD... ON!

FIRE AND SOUND DON'T HURT THESE SYMBIOTES, BUT I HAVE A PLAN.

WE'LL NEED **LIGHTNING...**

...AND MAGIC!
AHH!!! STRANGE! HELP! I CAN'T--
FELICIA!
AGHHHH!
DOCTOR STRANGE!!! CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
YES...YES, I CAN HEAR YOU.
A LITTLE LATE IN THE GAME, NO?
I DOUBT IT.
CAME AS FAST AS I COULD. NOW LISTEN--I'M DOWNLOADING A BATTLE PLAN INTO YOUR HEAD. THIS MIGHT HURT.
MY STAFF, FELICIA. QUICKLY.
WHO WERE YOU JUST TALKING TO? WHAT'S GOING ON?
THERE APPEARS TO BE A RATHER... INTENSE PLAN FORMING. AND I, FOR ONE, AM QUITE TIRED OF SITTING ON THE SIDELINES...
KNULL BELIEVES HIMSELF A GOD...

KARRAACK
...WELL, THEN...
...TWO CAN PLAY AT THAT GAME.
OKAY. LINKING EVERYONE NOW.
CYCLOPS.
INVISIBLE WOMAN.
HUMAN TORCH.
DOCTOR STRANGE.
THOR.
ON MY MARK.


GO!
ZAAARK
GO!
BWAAAHHH
GO!
FWASHHH

GOOD! NOW PUSH!
WE NEED TO FUNNEL THEM INTO THE CENTER OF THE CITY!
NAMOR.
YOU'RE UP.
ABOUT TIME.
BOOOM

UM...GUYS? DID I MISS A MEETING OR SOMETHING?
SPIDER-MAN, GET OUT OF THERE! INCOMING!
NOW YOU TELL ME!
KLANG
WE'RE CLEAR!
STORM!
THOR!

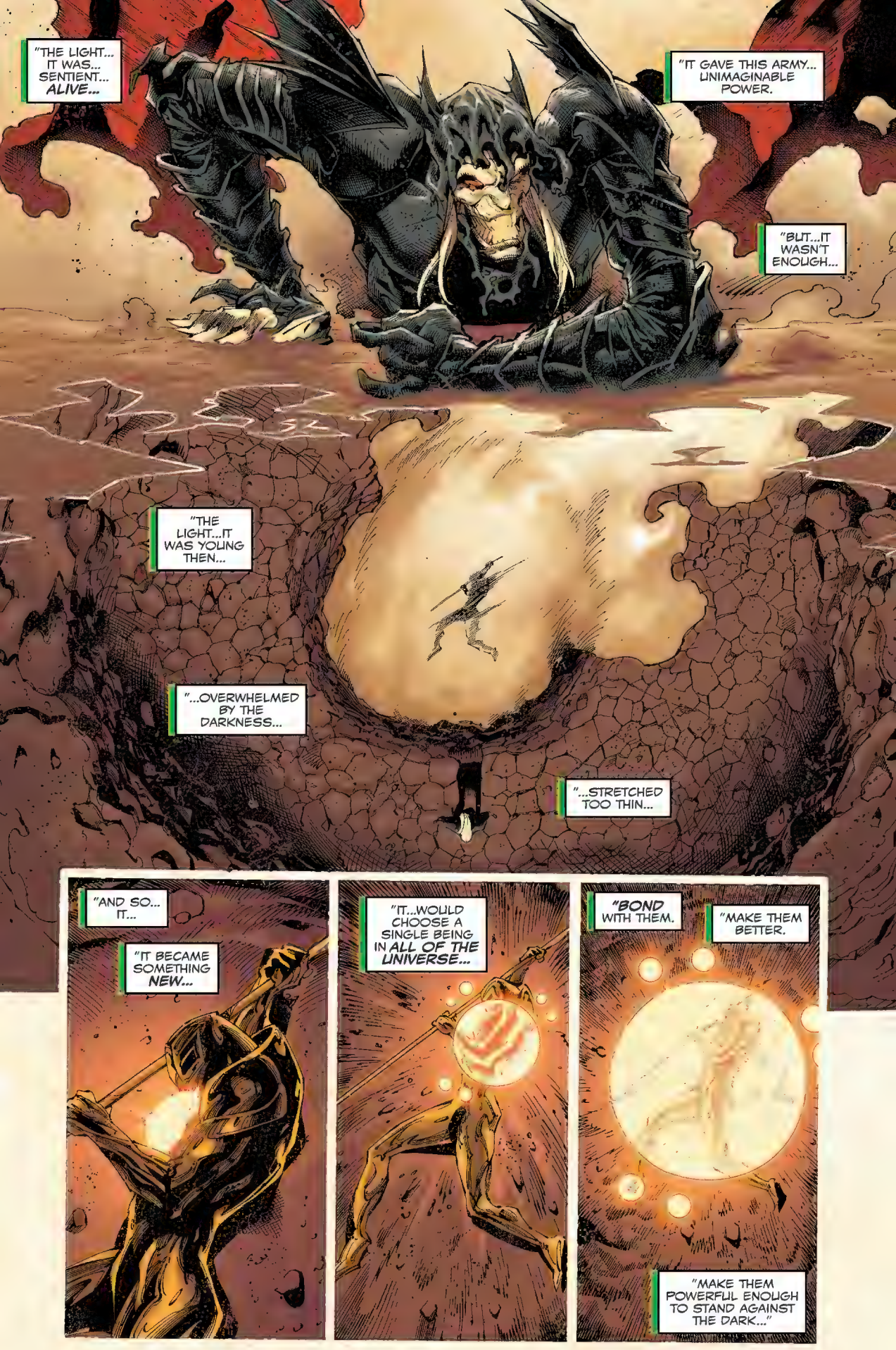
LIGHT IT UP!
MY PLEASURE.
AYE.
KRAKADOOM

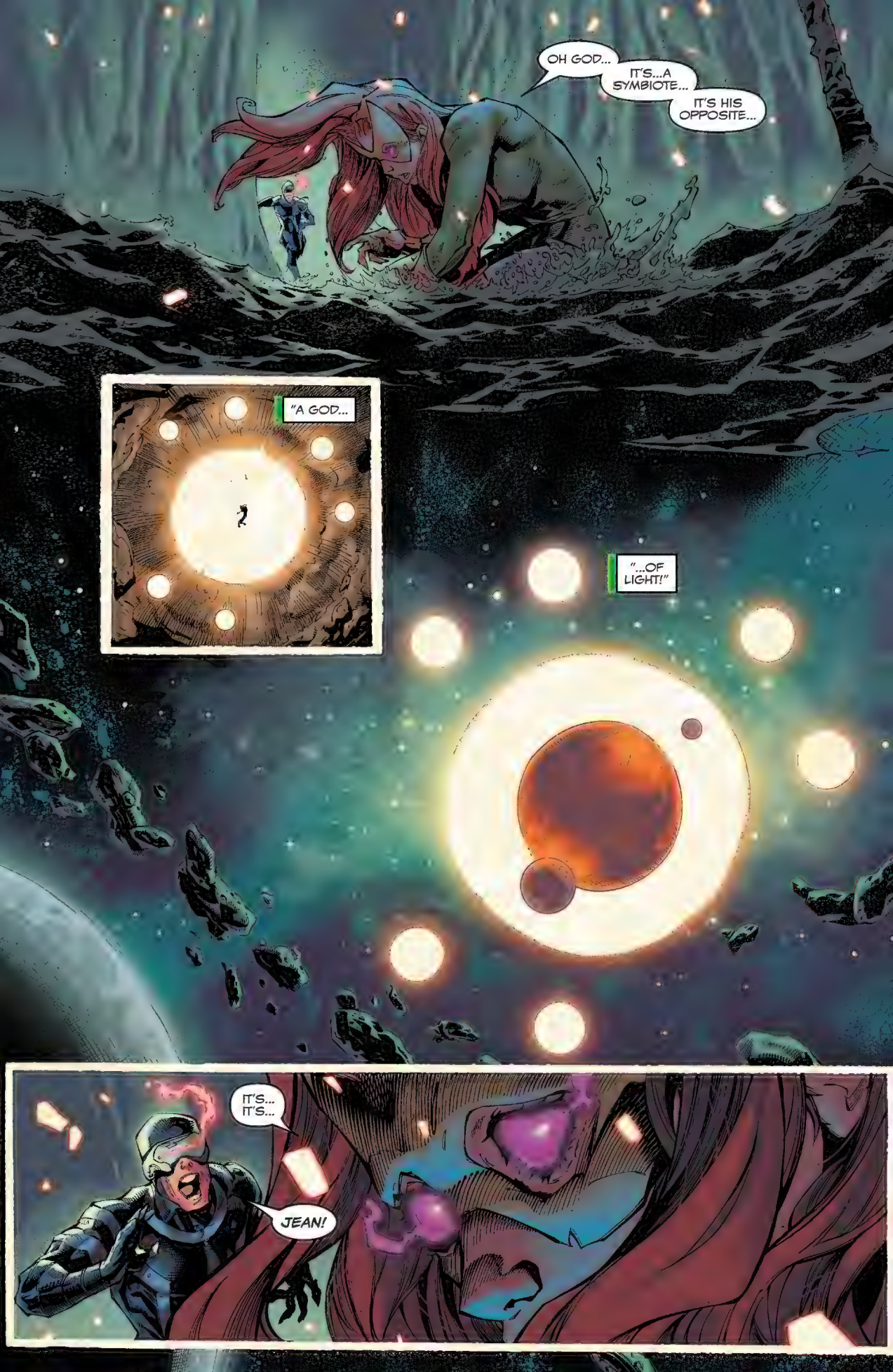
DYLAN! GET OUT OF THERE!
AGGHH!
NO!
HRK
YOU...YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME, CHILD? WOUND ME THROUGH MY HIVE?! YOU THINK YOU'VE WON?!
BUT YOU HAVE NOT BEATEN ME, BOY! AND YOU ARE ALONE! NO ONE IS COMING TO--
ACTUALLY, THAT'S WHERE I COME IN.
WHO--WHO IS THERE? SHOW YOURSELF! WHO DARES ENTER MY MIND?!
I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE BEEN INTRODUCED.
AGGHHH!

MY NAME IS JEAN GREY.
NOW...
...LET'S SEE WHAT MAKES YOU BLEED.

OH...
OH GOD... HIS MIND... IT'S...
"...COLD...
"I CAN'T... I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING...
"I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING THAT CAN HURT HIM...
"HE--HE FORGED THE DARKNESS...
"...BENT IT TO HIS WILL...
"HE'S BEATEN EVERYTHING...
"HE... OH GOD...
"THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN..."
WAIT...

"THERE IS...
"THERE IS ANOTHER...
"A REACTION.
"AN OPPOSITE.
"KNULL...HE'S THE GOD OF THE ABYSS.
"BUT HE IS NOT THE DARKNESS.
"IT--THE DARK--IT EXISTED LONG BEFORE HIM.
FLA-BOOM
"AND WITH DARKNESS...
"...THERE IS LIGHT.
"IT ROSE UP AGAINST HIM.
"IT...IT BONDED ITSELF WITH WARRIORS TO RAGE AGAINST HIM.


"THE LIGHT... IT WAS... SENTIENT... ALIVE...
"IT GAVE THIS ARMY... UNIMAGINABLE POWER.
"BUT...IT WASN'T ENOUGH...
"THE LIGHT...IT WAS YOUNG THEN...
"...OVERWHELMED BY THE DARKNESS...
"...STRETCHED TOO THIN...
"AND SO... IT...
"IT BECAME SOMETHING NEW...
"IT...WOULD CHOOSE A SINGLE BEING IN ALL OF THE UNIVERSE...
"BOND WITH THEM.
"MAKE THEM BETTER.
"MAKE THEM POWERFUL ENOUGH TO STAND AGAINST THE DARK..."


OH GOD...
IT'S...A SYMBIOTE...
IT'S HIS OPPOSITE...
"A GOD...
"...OF LIGHT!"
IT'S... IT'S...
JEAN!

JEAN... WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S...
IT'S HERE...
THE GOD OF LIGHT...
IT'S HERE. TRYING TO GET IN... BUT...BUT IT CAN'T...
"IT'S TRAPPED...
"I CAN HEAR IT...
"IT'S..."
...SCREAMING...
JEAN.
WORRY NOT...

I AM HERE.
FSSSS
I SEE THE LIGHT.
IT CANNOT BREAK THROUGH. IT CANNOT PASS THE BARRIER.
BUT I CAN.
BOOOOOM
SPLATCH
SPLATCH
SPLATCH
NO!!!

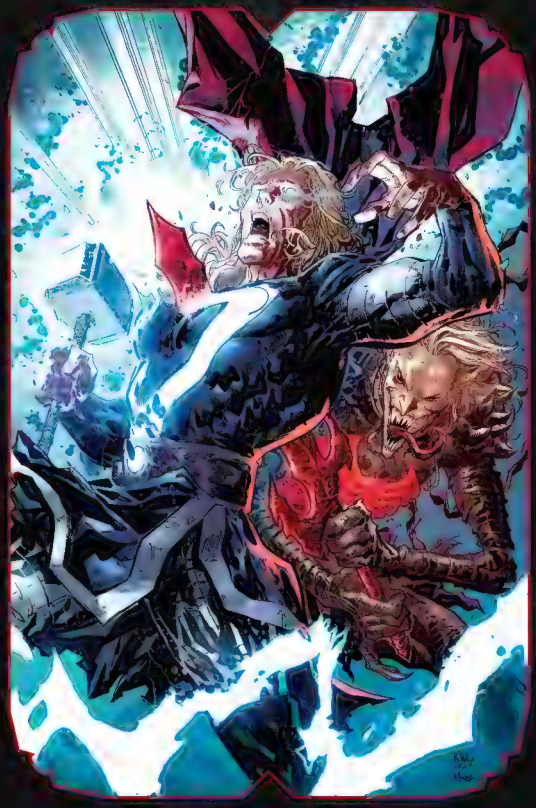
SPORTCH
OH...
I SEE...
YOU ARE NOT HERE... FOR ME...
GO, THEN...
"...GO AND FIND YOUR WARRIOR."
VWAAAAAAAAAA

OH MY GOD...
JEAN... THESE READINGS... THIS ENERGY SOURCE.
YOU'RE RIGHT... IT BEHAVES JUST LIKE A SYMBIOTE. IT ALWAYS HAS...
THIS... GOD OF LIGHT...
I-- I KNOW WHAT IT IS.
WE ALL DO...
WE'VE JUST BEEN CALLING IT BY THE WRONG NAME...
HEH...
"CAPTAIN UNIVERSE."
...FINALLY...
...THE ENIGMA FORCE...
...SOLVED.
BOOOM

FWAAAAAA
EDWARD BROCK
YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN.

KING IN BLACK #1 STORMBREAKERS VARIANT BY
NATACHA BUSTOS

KING IN BLACK #2 TATTOO VARIANT BY
IAN DEDERMAN

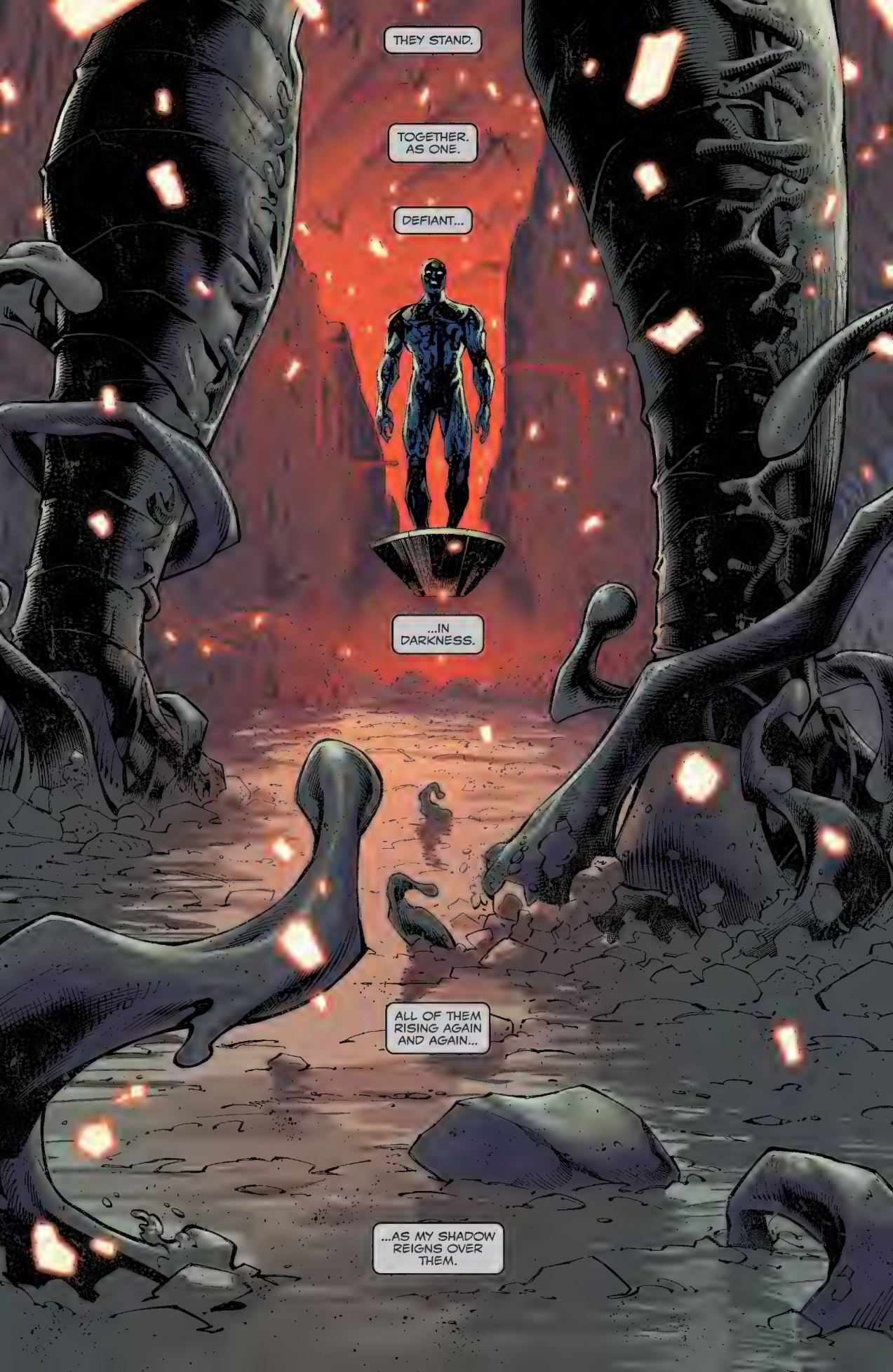


KING IN BLACK #3 SPOILER VARIANT BY
KEN LASHLEY & NOLAN WOODARD

KING IN BLACK #5 DRAGON VARIANT BY
DECLAN SHALVEY

KING IN BLACK #5

DAWN


THEY STAND.
TOGETHER. AS ONE.
DEFIANT...
...IN DARKNESS.
ALL OF THEM RISING AGAIN AND AGAIN...
...AS MY SHADOW REIGNS OVER THEM.

I CAN FEEL THEM.
YOU... SURFER... WE HAVE MET BEFORE, YES?
FEEL THEIR STRENGTH.
INDEED WE HAVE.
AND I REMAIN UNIMPRESSED, KNULL...
THEIR LIGHT...
THERE IS ANOTHER NOW. A GOD OF LIGHT.
SHING
YES. SO I HAVE HEARD.
BUT YOU, ABOVE ALL, SHOULD REMEMBER...
...NO MATTER HOW FAST LIGHT TRAVELS...

THEIR ANGER.
...DARKNESS IS ALWAYS THERE
WAITING.
IN A WAY...I ADMIRE YOU, LITTLE LIGHT.
I WILL REMEMBER YOU. YOU WILL DIE A NOBLE DEATH...
THEIR FEAR.
THEIR CERTAINTY...
PERHAPS...

...BUT I SHALL NOT FACE IT *ALONE.*

AVENGERS!

ASSEMBLE!

...THAT *THEY* WILL LOSE.

BWOOM

BUT THEY ARE *WRONG.*

BECAUSE WE ARE STRONGER WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER.

I APPRECIATE THE ASSISTS, FELLAS...

AND I'M BACK.
...BUT WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.
EDDIE...?
SO... ...THIS IS IT, THEN.
THE GREAT GOD OF THE LIGHT HAS CHOSEN A HOST THAT I HAVE KILLED...HOW MANY TIMES NOW?
IS THIS MEANT TO...SCARE ME?
HONESTLY... YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN BEAT--

HE THINKS HE'S BEATEN ME. ARROGANT.
MJOLNIR?!
YEAH...
AND HE'S RIGHT.
...I REALLY THINK WE CAN.
KNULL KILLED ME ONCE. NO REASON IN THE WORLD I SHOULD BE HERE.
NO REASON HE SHOULD THINK HE CAN'T DO IT AGAIN.
BUT...HE DOESN'T KNOW ME.
HE'S FOUGHT VENOM.
MJOLNIR... HE...SUMMONED MJOLNIR. THAT... THAT SHOULD BE--
IMPOSSIBLE.
BUT HE'S NEVER FOUGHT EDDIE BROCK.
SURFER. THOR. SPIDER-MAN.
ALL OF YOU.
STAY HERE.
KSHANG
PROTECT THE INNOCENT.

I'M THE MAN OF A THOUSAND SECOND CHANCES, DAMMIT.

LEAVE THIS ONE...

THE COMEBACK KING.

...TO US!

VWOOOOOOOSH

RAGHHH!
WAS...WAS THAT EDDIE BROCK WIELDING A BATTLE-AX MADE OUT OF THE SURFER'S BOARD AND THOR'S HAMMER? DID...DID HE JUST FLY, OR AM I--
CYKE...LISTEN... SOMETHING'S COMING...
YEAH...GEAR UP, CYCLOPS. WE AREN'T DONE HERE.
M-THUM-THUM-THUM-THUM-THUM-THUM TH
HE'S HIDING.
RUNNING.
THROWING EVERYTHING HE CAN IN MY WAY.
COME ON!
GOOD.

SPACK
BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME...
...WE'RE HAVING FUN.
GAME FACES, EVERYONE!
WE HAVE INCOMING!
THUM THUM THUM THUM THUM
STOP HIDING!
COME OUT AND END THIS, YOU--
YOU WANT YOUR END, LITTLE HOST?!
SPAK
THEN LET ALL-BLACK BE YOUR
NO.

NO MORE.
NO MORE SWORDS.
NO MORE DRAGONS.
TSSS
HOW—HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
KEEP PUSHING!
THUM THUM THUM THUM THUM THUM
HURK
JUST YOU.
NO!
AND ME.

KABASH!
YOU WANTED DARKNESS?!
I HOPE YOU ENJOY IT, YOU SON OF A--
HEH.
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THE DARKNESS.
THE CELESTIAL! IT MOVES! EVERYONE, QUICKLY--
WHRRR
CRASH
LET ME REMIND YOU.

DOOM
BZZT
SLURP
CRUNCH

I DON'T NEED A REMINDER.
WHOA! SORRY, JUST... YOU KNOW...
...FIGHTING DRAGONS OVER HERE.
MAN...
...I HATE THIS SYMBIOTE STUFF.
I REMEMBER WHEN YOU DRAGGED ME UP HERE FROM THE SEWERS.
ALL THE PAIN. THE FEAR. THE AGONY AS YOU RIPPED MY OTHER FROM ME.
YOU--YOU CAN'T--

I REMEMBER ALL OF IT.
CLINK
HAK
RAGHHH!

BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT I REMEMBER THE MOST?
I REMEMBER FEELING HOPELESS.
HELPLESS.
I REMEMBER FALLING.

BOOM
GET UP.
WE AREN'T DONE.
TOSS
YOU.... YOU CAN'T...
YOU CAN'T WIN.
YOU MAY KILL ME...BUT THE DARKNESS...
...IT LIVES...
...IN YOUR SON.

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT MY SON?!
SNATCH
LET'S GO TALK.
YOU...YOU WILL NEVER BE FREE OF ME...
THE VOID...IT IS ETERNAL...
VOOM OOOOOOO
THE DARKNESS HAS TEETH, CHILD.
YEAH?
SPLOOOM
SO DO WE.

WAAA

WE MIGHT ALL BE SWALLOWED BY IT.
WE MAY ALL BE CONSUMED BY THE VOID...
WE MAY ALL LOSE.
...DOOMED TO DROWN IN YOUR KINGDOM OF BLACK.
BUT... I DON'T CARE.
AGHHHH!
THIS...
THIS IS FOR DYLAN.

SPAWN

EDWARD... DO YOU FEEL IT?
I... YES. IT'S... VOICES...
...CALLING TO ME, BUT...BUT I CAN'T... I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
YOU'VE DONE IT.
THEY ARE SINGING TO YOU, EDWARD...
KNEEL...
HE IS GONE...
HIS HIVE...
THEY ARE...

THEY ARE FREE.
VICTORY! FINALLY, OUR NATION SHALL BE RECOGNIZED FOR THE NOBLE STATE THAT IT IS! HAIL CHERNOBYL! HAIL DRACULA!
DID YOU REALLY THINK WE WOULD LET YOU WALK AWAY, DAY WALKER?!
HONESTLY? I WAS KINDA HOPING YOU WOULDN'T.
SHOO
BLADE! COME IN. DO YOU NEED BACKUP?!
NAH. I'M GOOD.
HEH...GOOD, EH?! TELL ME... WHAT DO YOU KNOW THAT WE DO NOT?
WHUD
WHAT DO I KNOW?

ERISH
I KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS.
SHUNK
BLADE. ARE WE CLEAR?
I DON'T KNOW A WHOLE LOT ABOUT THESE SYMBIOTES, M...
...BUT FROM WHERE I'M STANDING...
...YEAH, MAN...

...WE'RE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT.
BOARD, TO ME.
MJOLNIR.
IT WOULD APPEAR THE BATTLE HAS BEEN WON.
INDEED. THE BATTLE IS DONE, THOR.
HOWEVER...

"...I DO NOT THINK THINGS WILL EVER BE THE SAME."
EDDIE...
IS... IS THAT REALLY YOU?

KNULL... IS HE...?
...HEH... YEAH. YEAH, MORE OR LESS.
OH MY GOD, EDDIE...
...YOU DID IT.
CLAP
IT'S OVER.
NO...

...IT'S NOT.
AAGH! NO! NO!
DYLAN... IT'S ME.
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
D-DAD?
HEY, KIDDO.
WHAT'S WRONG? TALK TO--
DAD!
IT'S OKAY. I'M HERE.

NOW...YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME, OKAY? I LOVE YOU.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY.
IT--IT HURTS...INSIDE ME... IT...
I'M STILL... I HAVE A PIECE OF HIM...AND-- AND I...
I CAN FEEL HIM... BURNING...
I KNOW, SON.
TRY TO BREATHE.
THIS IS GOING TO HURT.

AAGHHH!
I KNOW. I KNOW, SON.
I KNOW IT HURTS.
I FEEL IT TOO.
BUT I MADE YOU A PROMISE.
YOU WILL NOT INHERIT THIS DARKNESS.
WHAM

WAIT... WHAT--WHAT'S HAPPENING?
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, EDWARD.
BUT I MUST LEAVE YOU. YOU DO NOT NEED THE LIGHT TO PROTECT YOU.
NOT ANYMORE.
BUT...I DON'T UNDERSTAND! HOW WILL I--
YOU HAVE A NEW ROLE NOW, EDWARD.
YOU HAVE BECOME SOMETHING ELSE.
SOMETHING NEW.
EDDIE, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
I FOUND YOU.
DAD! DAD, ARE YOU OKAY?! WHAT'S--
YES. I CAN HEAR YOU!
CAN YOU FEEL IT, EDDIE?
CAN YOU FEEL WHAT HAS HAPPENED?!
EDDIE... WHAT IS THIS?!
IT'S OKAY.

I CAN...I CAN HEAR THEM...
WE'RE OKAY.
STAY HERE. I'LL...WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK, SON.
...I CAN HEAR THEM ALL.
THE HIVE... BUT I CAN'T... I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT...WHAT IS GOING ON? WHY ARE THE SYMBIOTES CHASING HIM LIKE THAT?
I...I DON'T THINK THEY ARE...
THEY ARE SPEAKING TO YOU IN OUR ANCIENT TONGUE, EDDIE.
BECAUSE YOU...YOU DEFEATED THE VOID.
YOU FREED OUR KIND.
YOU ARE THE HIVE MIND NOW...EDDIE...
...YOU...ARE THE GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES...

YOU ARE THE KING IN BLACK.

KING IN BLACK #4 HIDDEN GEM VARIANT BY
ALEX HORLEY

KING IN BLACK #4 TATTOO VARIANT BY
IAN BEDERMAN

KING IN BLACK #4 SPOILER VARIANT BY
PAOLO RIVERA

KING IN BLACK #4 DRAGON VARIANT BY
RAHZZAH

VENOM #31

THIRTY-TWO SECONDS

A LONG TIME AGO...
USERNAME:
REX STRICKLAND
PASSWORD:
****
REX STRICKLAND'S WAREHOUSE.
BEGIN RECORDING.
THIS IS REX STRICKLAND, AND IF YOU'RE HEARING THIS, I'M DEAD.
WHICH, WELL, HONESTLY...
...MEANS NO ONE WILL EVER HEAR THIS.
BECAUSE THE ONLY MAN WHO WOULD EVER LISTEN...
...IS LIKELY DEAD TOO.

"EDDIE BROCK.
"VENOM.
"FEW HOURS AGO I SENT HIM ON A MISSION TO SAVE SOME OF MY OLD FRIENDS...*
*SEE VENOM #1, TRUE BELIEVERS! --DEVIN
"HE WASN'T THE VENOM I WANTED FOR THE JOB, BUT, WELL, HE'S ALL WE GOT NOW...
"FLASH THOMPSON--NOW THERE WAS A VENOM WITH SOME TRAINING. SOME STRATEGY AND KNOW-HOW.
"THIS BROCK GUY, THOUGH...
"HE STRIKES ME AS SOMEONE WHO TENDS TO FALL HEADLONG INTO HIS PROBLEMS..."

AND IF WE'RE GONNA SURVIVE WHAT'S COMING...
...HE'S GONNA NEED TO CATCH UP QUICK.
POOR BASTARD DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT'S OUT THERE WAITING FOR HIM YET.
HELL, LAST TIME I TALKED TO HIM, HE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HIS OWN SYMBIOTE'S NAME.
I'M TRYING TO HAVE HOPE IN HIM. I AM.
BUT THE HOPE DIES A LITTLE AS THE HOURS GO BY...
BECAUSE IF HE CAN'T HANDLE THIS MISSION...
...WHEN THE REAL WAR BEGINS, HE'S GONNA LEARN REAL QUICK IF HE CAN RISE TO THE OCCASION...

NOW.

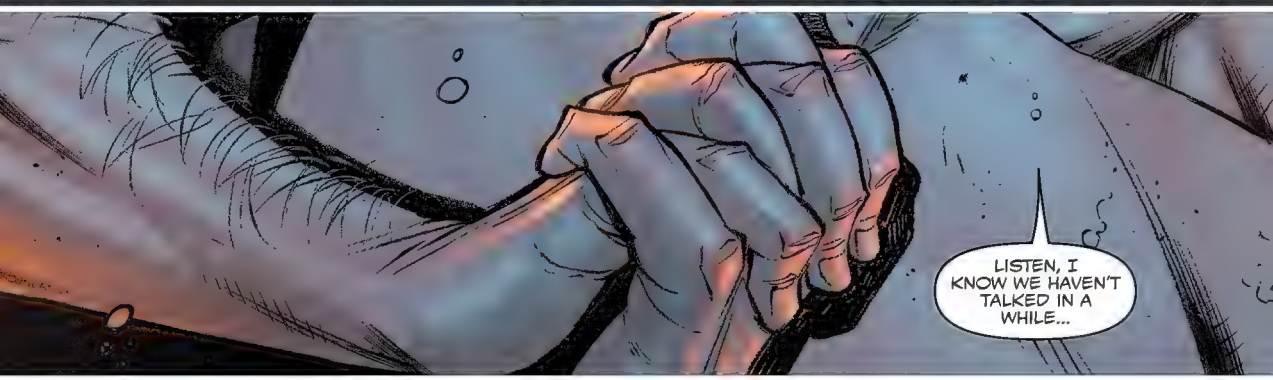
"...OR FALL LIKE THE REST.

"IT'S BEEN EIGHTEEN HOURS SINCE I SENT BROCK ON A MISSION TO SAVE MY BROTHERS.
NOOO!
NOW, NOW...LITTLE ONE...
PLEASE, NO! DO NOT TAKE ME--
DON'T FIGHT THIS...
YOU AND I HAVE MET BEFORE, YES? WE'VE BEEN THROUGH THIS. YOU CAN'T FIGHT ME.
DON'T TAKE ME FROM EDDIE! HE--
PLEASE... YOUR HOST HAS ALWAYS HELD YOU BACK, MY CHILD...
"AND TEN HOURS SINCE HE LAST MADE CONTACT.
...NEEDS... ME...

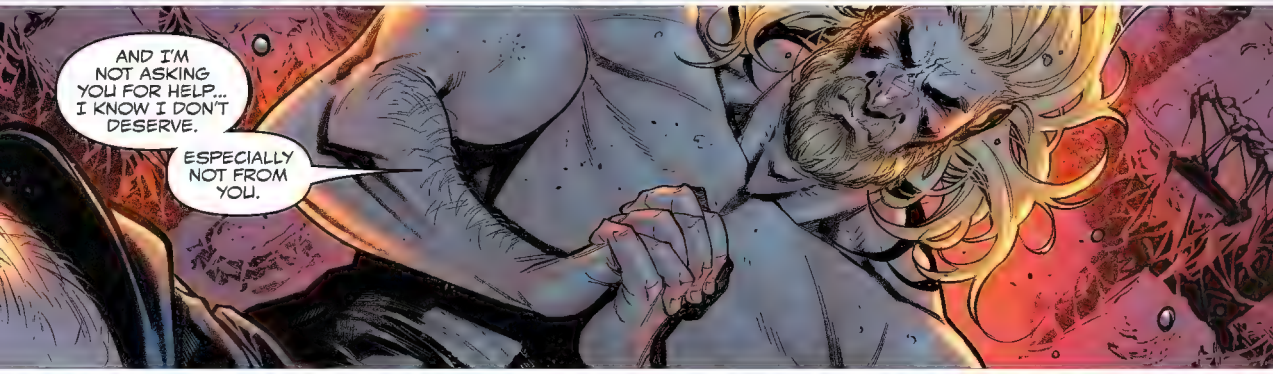
"I FEAR THE MISSION...
DO NOT CRY. DO NOT MOURN HIM. HE IS NOTHING.
YOU ARE HOME NOW...
"...AND MY FRIENDS...
...THIS WORLD IS OURS!
"...ARE LOST.

"AND I BEGIN TO QUESTION WHAT I HAVE DONE TRUSTING THIS MAN I HAVE NEVER MET, AND KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.
HELP! PLEASE, I--I CAN'T FEEL YOU...
PLEASE, DON'T LET...
"THAT'S THE HEART OF ALL OF THIS, THOUGH, ISN'T IT?
...DON'T LET ME DIE ALONE...
"ON THE INSIDE.
"WHO IS EDDIE BROCK?

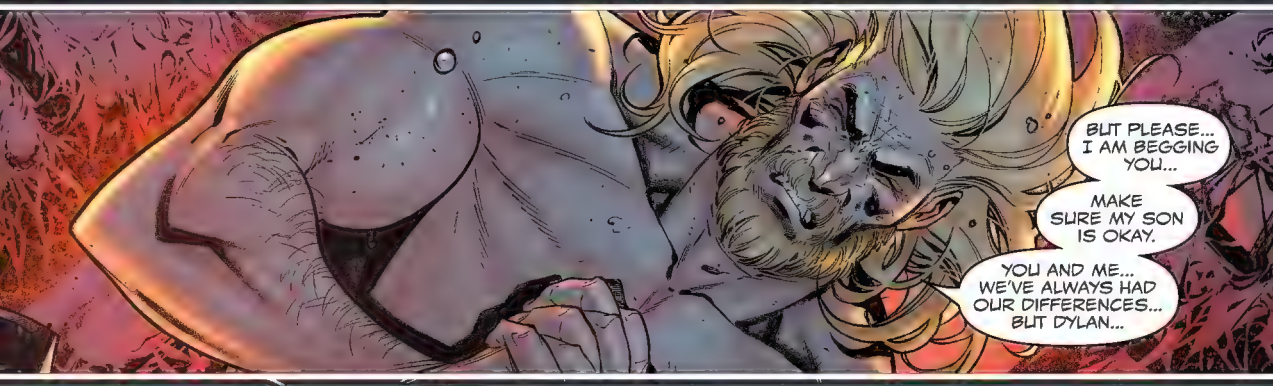
"I DIG INTO HIM...



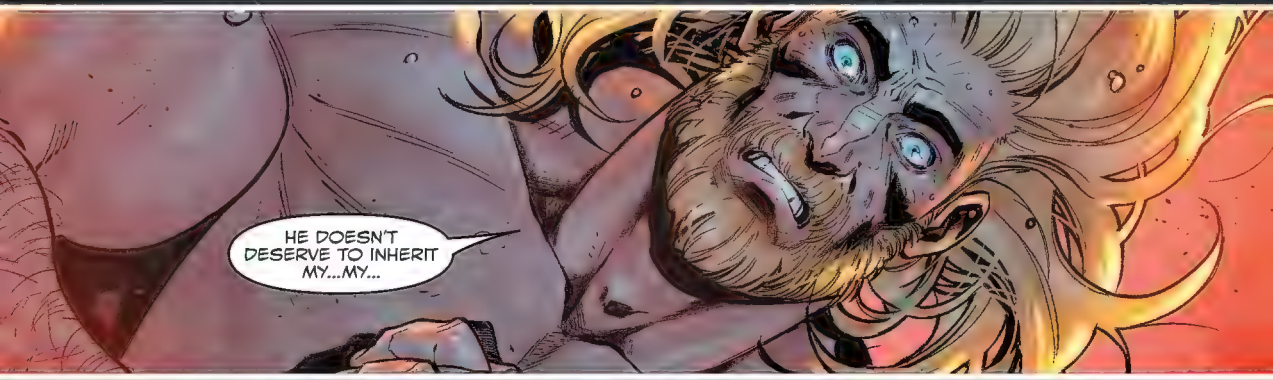
"I FIND MORE QUESTIONS.



"MOTHER DIED IN CHILDBIRTH. CATHOLIC AS HELL. ONLY CHILD.



"FATHER WAS RICH, BUT LOST IT ALL AFTER EDDIE WAS INVOLVED IN SOME SORT OF ACCIDENT WHEN HE WAS A KID.



"KID'S SMART. GOES TO COLLEGE. GETS A GIG AT THE *DAILY GLOBE*. WRITES ABOUT MURDER.

"WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, EDDIE?

...DARKNESS.

"UNSOLVED STUFF. SERIAL KILLERS.

"THAT KIND OF THING.

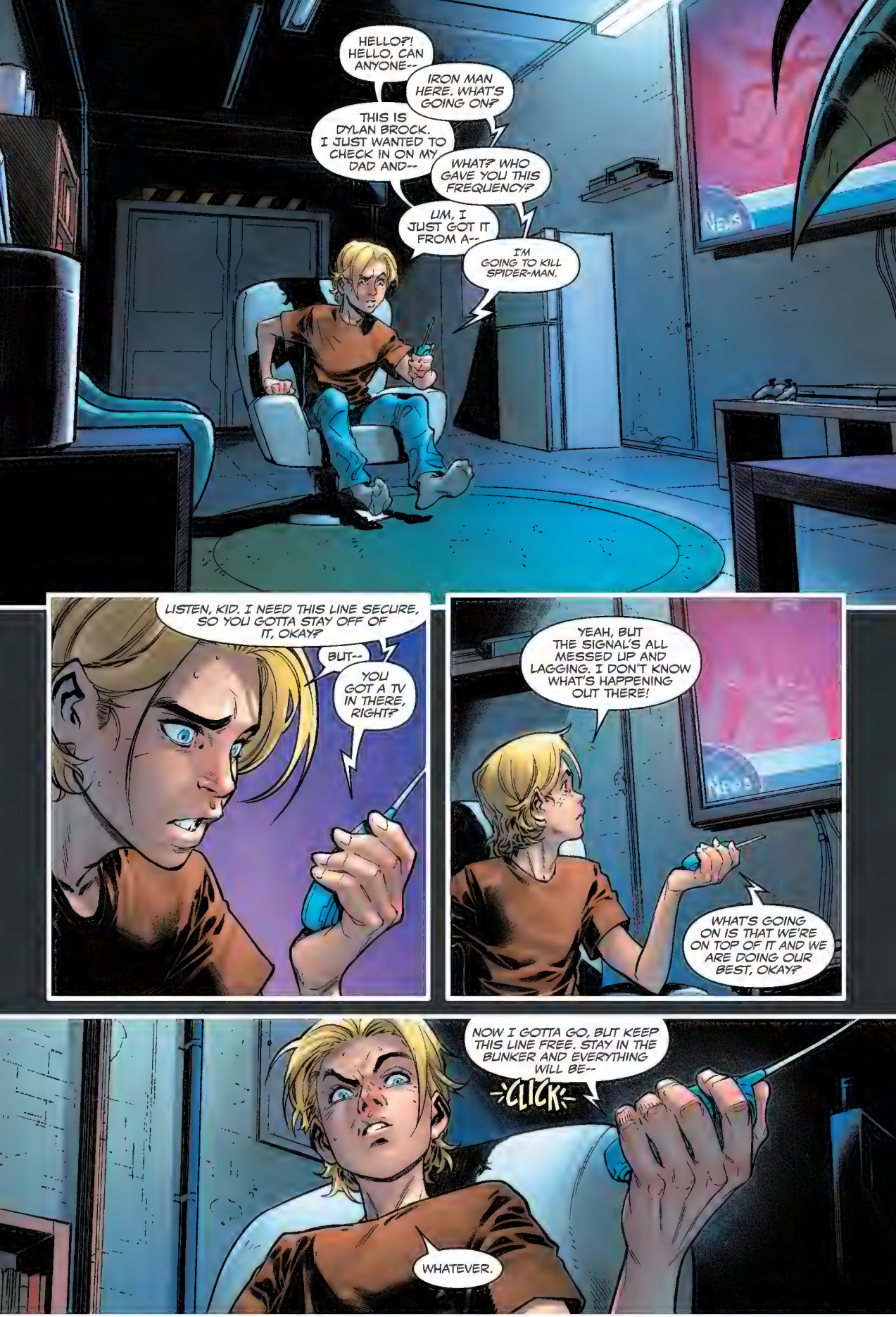
"WHY ARE YOU SO ATTRACTED TO THIS STUFF?

"ONE DAY HE WRITES THE WRONG THING ABOUT THE WRONG GUY. GETS @#$%-CANNED FROM THE PAPER.

"AND THEN...

OH MY GOD...

"...FALLS OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.


HELLO?! HELLO, CAN ANYONE--
IRON MAN HERE. WHAT'S GOING ON?
THIS IS DYLAN BROCK. I JUST WANTED TO CHECK IN ON MY DAD AND--
WHAT? WHO GAVE YOU THIS FREQUENCY?
UM, I JUST GOT IT FROM A--
I'M GOING TO KILL SPIDER-MAN.
LISTEN, KID. I NEED THIS LINE SECURE, SO YOU GOTTA STAY OFF OF IT, OKAY?
BUT--
YOU GOT A TV IN THERE, RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT THE SIGNAL'S ALL MESSED UP AND LAGGING. I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE!
WHAT'S GOING ON IS THAT WE'RE ON TOP OF IT AND WE ARE DOING OUR BEST, OKAY?
NOW I GOTTA GO, BUT KEEP THIS LINE FREE. STAY IN THE BUNKER AND EVERYTHING WILL BE--
CLICK
WHATEVER.

THERE HAS TO BE A WAY...
IF I COULD JUST GET TO MY DAD, I COULD...
OR... WAIT...
NO...
CAN YOU HEAR ME? IT'S DYLAN, CAN YOU--
DYLAN, NO!!! DISCONNECT YOURSELF FROM THE HIVE! HE'LL FIND YOU!!!
AGH! WHAT'S GOING--
DYLAN, GET OUT!!!
THEY... THREW ME OUT...
SEVERED MY CONNECTION, BUT WHY...
WHAT DID THEY NOT WANT ME TO...

...SEE?
...
DAD?

"BUT BLINK AN EYE, AND NOW HE'S A GOOD GUY IN SAN FRANCISCO...
DAMMIT, THAT CHOPPER! THEY AREN'T GOING TO MAKE IT...
THINK, EDDIE, THINK!
MAYBE IF I CAN PUSH OFF THE BUILDING, I CAN--
"...TRYING TO PROTECT PEOPLE.
AGGHHH!!!
"WHY DO YOU CARE SO MUCH FOR THE INNOCENT?
WHAT THE HELL?! HOW DID YOU--
YOU HAVE TO LAND! YOU CANNOT OUTRUN THAT--
"MAYBE THAT'S THE REAL STORY OF EDWARD ALLAN BROCK...
BLOOD!
"...THE MAN OF A THOUSAND SECOND CHANCES.

NO!!!
"THE COMEBACK KING.

"TROUBLE IS I KNOW EXACTLY WHO HE IS.
"EDDIE BROCK IS NO ONE.
KR-RACACK
"AND ONE OF THESE DAYS THEM CHANCES ARE GONNA RUN DRY.
THWAK
"COULD BE TODAY, COULD BE A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.
"EITHER WHICH WAY, IT DON'T CHANGE THE TRUTH.

"HE'S JUST ANOTHER DEAD MAN WEARING HIS OWN COFFIN."

KING IN BLACK #5 VARIANT BY
SKOTTIE YOUNG & JEAN-FRANÇOIS BEAULIEU

KING IN BLACK #5 FOTOC VARIANT BY
IAN BEDERMAN

KING IN BLACK #5 SPOILER VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & JASON KEITH

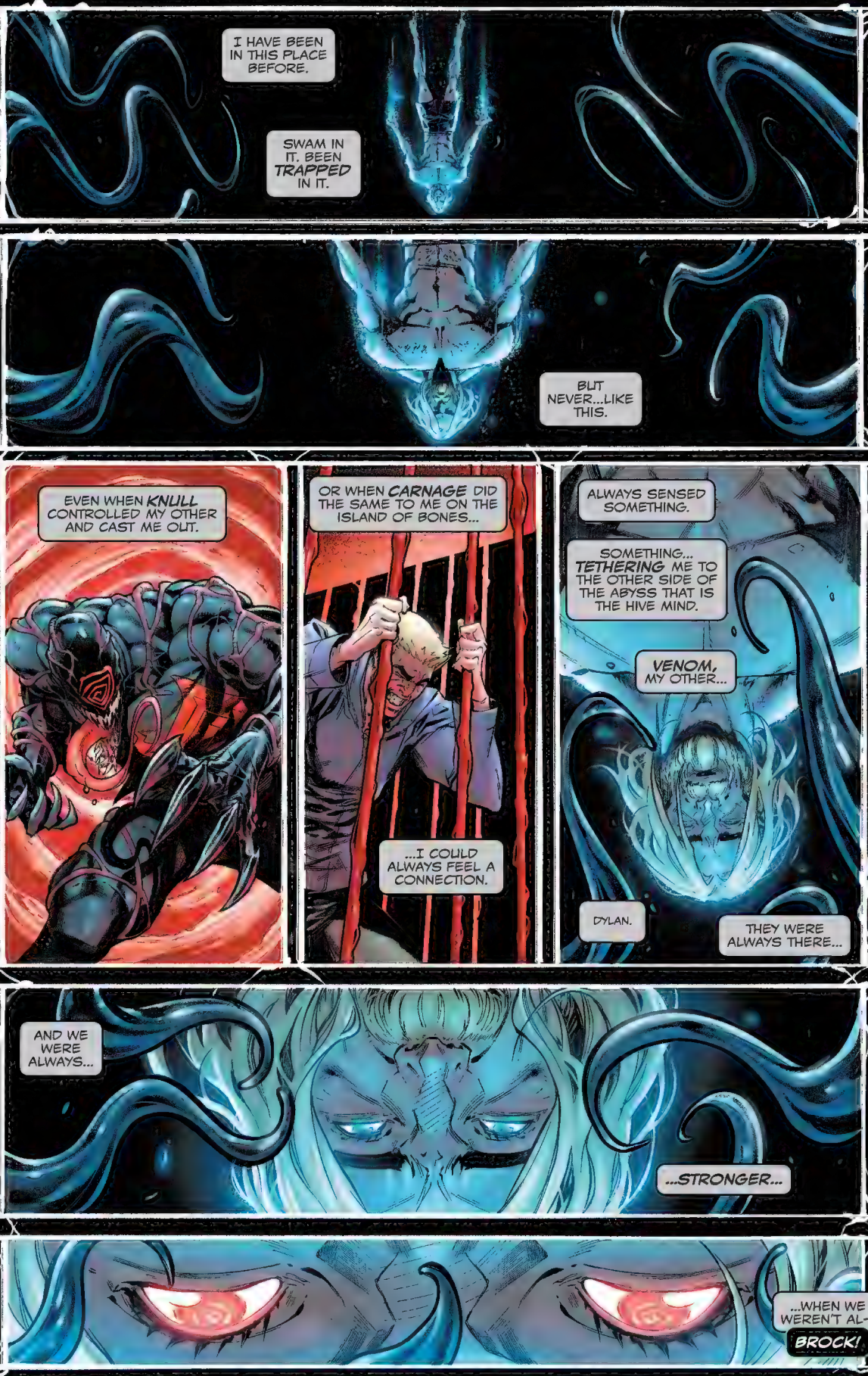
KING IN BLACK #5 DRAGON VARIANT BY
GERARDO SANDOVAL & ERICK ARCINIEGA

VENOM #32

THE OTHER SIDE

SMASH
I HAVE FALLEN MANY TIMES IN MY LIFE.
FALLEN SO HARD I THOUGHT I WOULD NEVER GET UP.
THAT I HAD SEEN THE BOTTOM...AND SCRATCHED AND CLAWED MY WAY UP FROM IT AND INTO THE LIGHT AGAIN...
BUT NOW...

...NOW I'M FALLING AND THERE IS NO BOTTOM...
I LOOK UP...
...AND THERE IS ONLY... DARKNESS.
I CAN...SEE MYSELF...
...MY BODY. MY PHYSICAL FORM...
...STILL HANGING ON TO THE WORLD ABOVE ME...
I SCREAM AT HIM.
AT MYSELF.
I SCREAM UNTIL I FEEL BLOOD IN MY THROAT...
...BUT THERE IS NO ONE TO HEAR IT.


I HAVE BEEN IN THIS PLACE BEFORE.
SWAM IN IT. BEEN TRAPPED IN IT.
BUT NEVER...LIKE THIS.
EVEN WHEN KNULL CONTROLLED MY OTHER AND CAST ME OUT.
OR WHEN CARNAGE DID THE SAME TO ME ON THE ISLAND OF BONES...
...I COULD ALWAYS FEEL A CONNECTION.
ALWAYS SENSED SOMETHING.
SOMETHING... TETHERING ME TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ABYSS THAT IS THE HIVE MIND.
VENOM, MY OTHER...
DYLAN.
THEY WERE ALWAYS THERE...
AND WE WERE ALWAYS...
...STRONGER...
...WHEN WE WEREN'T AL--
BROCK!

WAKE UP, SOLDIER!
WH-WHAT? I CAN HEAR YOU! WHO ARE YOU?!
KNULL'S LITTLE MINIONS IN HERE ALMOST HAVE YOU. THEY'RE TAKING YOU DOWN INTO HELL, SON.
NOW....I CAN GET YOU OUT...GET YOU FREE OF THEM...
BUT IT'S GONNA HURT LIKE @#$%!
WHAT? WHAT IS--
FWAAASSH
AGHH!
STOP.
FALLING.
WHAT? WHAT DO I DO?
THIS IS DO OR DIE TIME, SON.
ALL RIGHT. NOW CONCENTRATE, DAMMIT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. HOW--
YOU'RE IN THE HIVE NOW, SON. YOU'RE PART OF IT.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO JUST LET THEM SWALLOW YOU LIKE THAT...
BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST?
HOW DO YOU STOP FALLING?
SAME WAY EVERYONE STOPS FALLING.
YOU BRACE YOUR ASS FOR IMPACT...
...AND YOU LAND.
AGGHH--
BROCK...

WHAT... HOW DID I JUST--
...I'D LOVE TO TELL YOU THE WORST OF IT IS OVER...
...BUT THIS NEXT PART IS THE HARDEST.
OH MY GOD...
NOW YOU STAND THE HELL UP.
AND WE GO TO WORK.

R-REX?
MORE OR LESS.
COME WITH ME.
THIS IS IT.
THE END OF THE LINE.
YOU HAVE A LOT TO LEARN, SON.

WAIT, LOOK! THOSE PEOPLE!
WE HAVE TO HELP THEM!
EDDIE, DON'T!!!
MOVE!
AGH!
WHA-- WHAT JUST--

EDDIE, NO! GET THE HELL AWAY FROM THAT THING!
EDDIE!
NO, DAMMIT! I'M NOT RUNNING! I HAVE TO PROTECT THE--
NO!!!
AGH!

AHHH!

SLOWLY...
LET. IT. HEAL. COME BACK TOGETHER...
WHAT...? MY BODY...FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN RIPPED IN HALF. DRAGON WENT RIGHT THROUGH ME. I DON'T--
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
THAT...
THAT WAS A WARNING.
REX...WHAT IS THIS? WHERE ARE WE?!

ALL... ALL OF THESE PEOPLE... REX, TALK TO ME. WHAT IS THIS--
COME ON, SON. DON'T PLAY DUMB WITH ME... WHETHER OR NOT YOU WANT TO ADMIT IT...
...YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE.
THE HIVE.
OH MY GOD... ALL THESE PEOPLE... THEY...
HE TOOK THEM...
YES, HE DID.
AND SORRY TO SAY...
...IT WASN'T JUST THE CIVILIANS...
CAP, THE THING...
GOD, NO. NO... I SHOULD HAVE...
THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE... NOTHING ANYONE COULD HAVE DONE...
...OR CAN DO...

NO! I'VE BEEN TRAPPED IN HERE BEFORE AND I'VE BEATEN THIS!
THERE HAS TO BE SOMETHING I CAN DO! I HAVE TO SAVE THEM! I HAVE TO GET TO MY SON!
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH, BROCK.
LOOK AT YOURSELF. HAVEN'T EVEN GOT A SHIRT ON YOUR BACK.
THIS ISN'T LIKE THOSE TIMES. YOU'RE A CODEX NOW.
A MEMORY.
THE SYMBIOTES, THEY KEEP PIECES OF ALL THE HOSTS THEY'VE BONDED WITH IN THEIR HIVE. BUT THEY...
...THEY AREN'T REAL...
...THEY'RE GHOSTS.
WALKING INFORMATION. PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME? WE CAN SURVIVE HERE A LITTLE BETTER. MOVE THINGS AROUND A BIT. AFFECT LITTLE THINGS...
...LIKE HOW I WAS ABLE TO GET YOU TO PUSH THOSE SYMBIOTES OFF OF YOU BACK THERE...
BUT THE REAL WORLD? THE REAL, REAL WORLD?
IT'S GONE, MAN.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
HOW? HOW CAN WE DO THIS, BUT THESE POOR PEOPLE ARE JUST TRAPPED AND CAN'T--
BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN BONDED TO SYMBIOTES LONGER THAN THESE PEOPLE STUCK HERE...BUT EVEN THEN...WE'RE JUST PIECES OF DATA IN THE MACHINE.
RIGHT...YEAH, I REMEMBER. I WAS ABLE TO ABSORB FLASH THOMPSON'S CODEX, AND HE CAME BACK FOR A WHILE...
OKAY. WE...JUST NEED TO GET ME BACK TO MY BODY, AND THEN I CAN--
AH, MAN...YOU... YOU DON'T KNOW...
THERE... IS NO... YOU.

"YOU'RE DEAD, EDDIE."

WAIT...
NO...
DYLAN...
SON, NO... I'M...I'M HERE, I'M--
EDDIE...I KNOW THIS IS HARD. BUT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT...AND STANDING AROUND LOOKING AT IT AIN'T GONNA MAKE IT ANY--
DON'T.
TOUCH.
ME.

NOW, SON. CALM DOWN OR--
NO! I WILL NOT ACCEPT THIS!
I KEEP TELLING YOU. IT'S OVER! YOU CAN'T--
I SAY WHEN THIS IS OVER!
I HAVE BEEN PUSHED AROUND AND SWALLOWED WHOLE AND DROWNED IN THIS @#$% MY ENTIRE LIFE, AND I AM SICK OF IT!!!
THEY DON'T GET TO TAKE THIS ONE FROM ME. NOT LIKE THIS!
T-TAKE WHAT?
MY DEATH.
I WON'T ALLOW IT.

LOOK, KID... THERE'S NOT MUCH TO BE DONE. I MEAN--
NO! YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. YOU WERE ABLE TO CONTROL SOME OF THE SYMBIOTES IN HERE BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN BONDED TO ONE LONGER THAN ANYONE HERE.
YOUR CONNECTION IS STRONGER...
YES. BUT EVEN THEN...I CAN'T AFFECT ANY REAL CHANGE IN PHYSICAL SPACE.
I CAN.
YOU THINK YOU HAVE CONTROL IN HERE BECAUSE YOU WORE A SYMBIOTE FOR, WHAT? A COUPLE OF YEARS?
WELL, I'VE WORN ONE FOR LONGER THAN ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING WHO HAS EVER LIVED!
IF I CAN FIND MY OTHER IN HERE, I PROMISE YOU THE TWO OF US TOGETHER CAN BURN THIS THING TO THE GROUND!
NOT... NOT A BAD POINT.
ONLY ONE PROBLEM...
FINDING IT AIN'T GONNA BE THE ISSUE...

...GETTING TO IT...GETTING IT FREED...
"...THAT'S GONNA TAKE A LITTLE WORK."
DEAR GOD...

HOW...
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO GET UP THERE... ALONE...?
NOT ALONE, KID.
LIKE I TOLD YOU...THERE'S STILL SOME SYMBIOTE FRIENDLIES IN THE HIVE...SOME THAT WERE HERE BEFORE KNULL ARRIVED AND DON'T EXACTLY AGREE WITH HIS AGENDA...
YOU'LL HAVE ME AND MINE. TYRANNOSAURUS REX'LL HAVE YOUR BACK AS LONG AS WE'RE STANDING.
BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY...
...I'M HAPPY TO SAY I FINALLY FOUND THE VENOM I WAS LOOKING FOR IN THE FIRST PLACE...

AGENT FLASH "VENOM" THOMPSON REPORTING FOR DUTY, SIR.
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BROCK.

VENOM #01 SECOND-PRINTING VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN

VENOM #02 SECOND-PRINTING VARIANT BY
GERARDO SANDOVAL & JASON KEITH

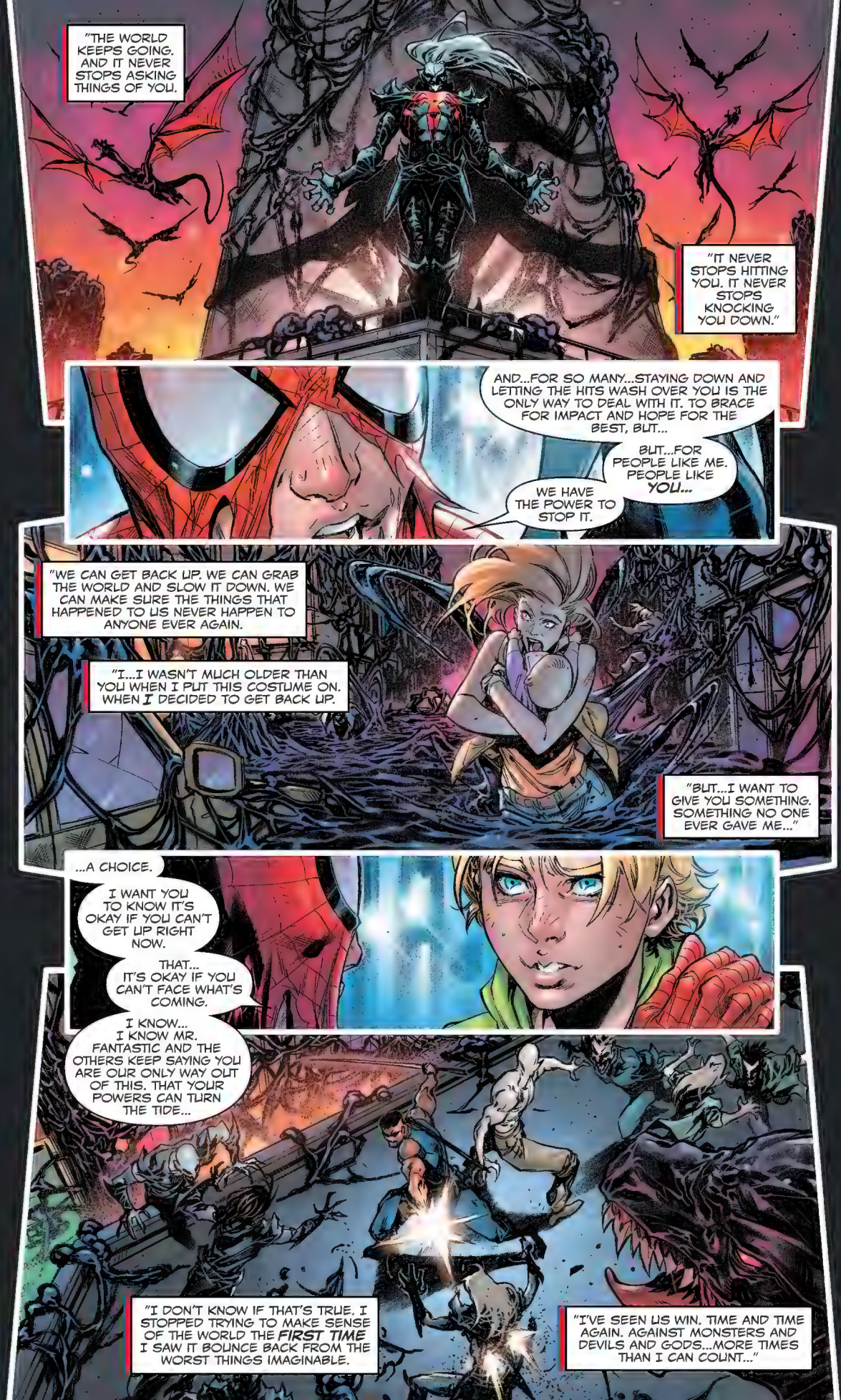
VENOM #03 VARIANT BY
DAVID FINCH & FRANK D'ARMATA

VENOM #04 MAN-THING 50TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT BY
SUPERLOG

VENOM #33

AGENTS VENOM

DYLAN...
I KNOW WE DON'T KNOW EACH OTHER VERY WELL...BUT...I--I MADE YOUR DAD A PROMISE, AND...I JUST... I NEED YOU TO LISTEN TO ME, OKAY?
I... I'VE BEEN WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW.
I LOST MY PARENTS TOO. I'VE... LOST A LOT OF PEOPLE IN MY LIFE. PEOPLE THAT I LOVED. THAT I THOUGHT WOULD ALWAYS BE THERE TO PROTECT ME. TO GUIDE ME...
I KNOW IT FEELS LIKE...
...LIKE THE WORLD IS CRUMBLING BENEATH YOUR FEET. LIKE THE EARTH SHOULDN'T STILL BE SPINNING NOW THAT...
...NOW THAT THEY'RE GONE.
BUT THEN...IT ALWAYS DOES.
IT JUST...KEEPS SPINNING.

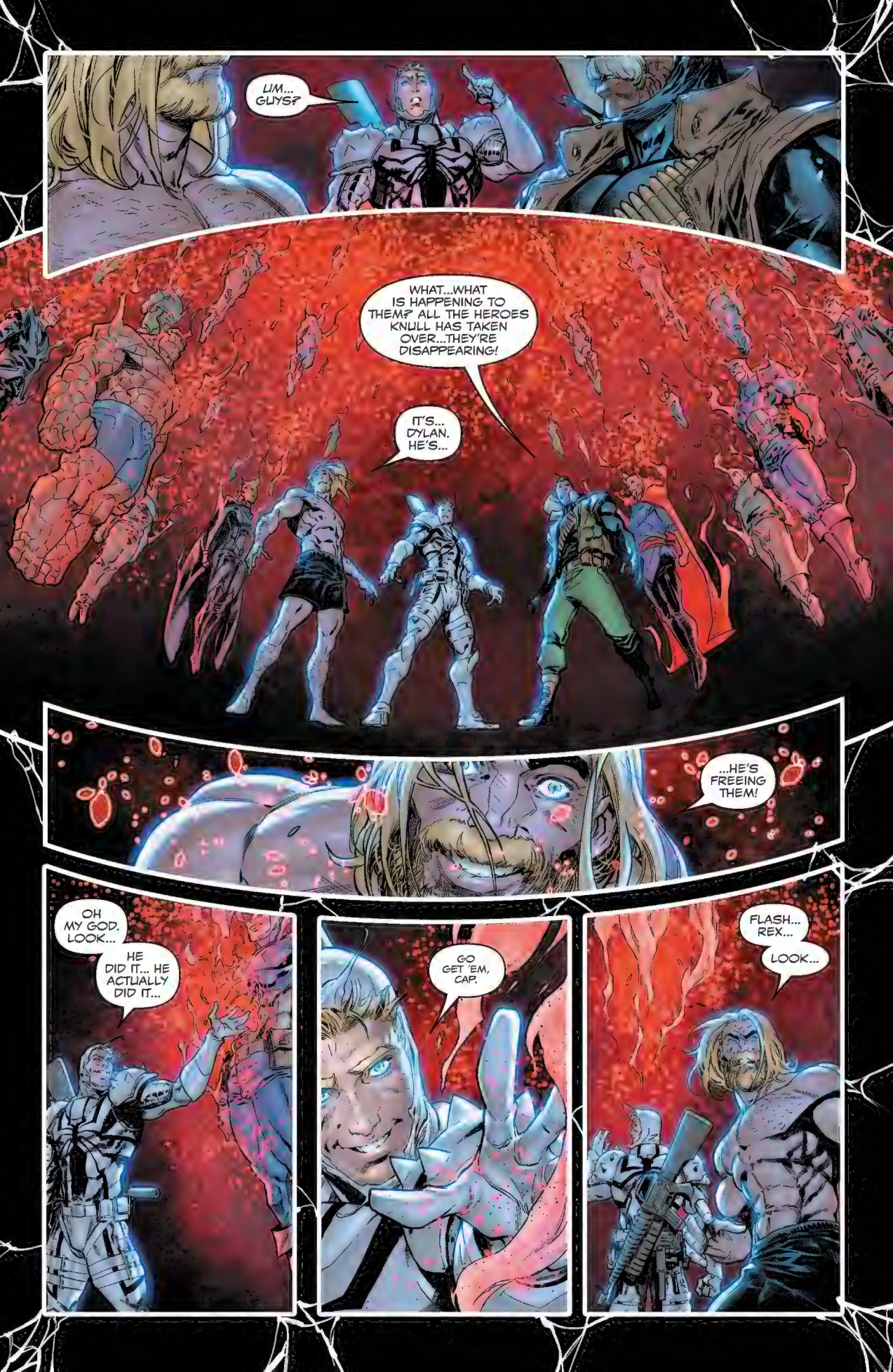

"THE WORLD KEEPS GOING. AND IT NEVER STOPS ASKING THINGS OF YOU.
"IT NEVER STOPS HITTING YOU. IT NEVER STOPS KNOCKING YOU DOWN."
AND...FOR SO MANY...STAYING DOWN AND LETTING THE HITS WASH OVER YOU IS THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL WITH IT. TO BRACE FOR IMPACT AND HOPE FOR THE BEST, BUT...
BUT...FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME. PEOPLE LIKE YOU...
WE HAVE THE POWER TO STOP IT.
"WE CAN GET BACK UP. WE CAN GRAB THE WORLD AND SLOW IT DOWN. WE CAN MAKE SURE THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED TO US NEVER HAPPEN TO ANYONE EVER AGAIN.
"I...I WASN'T MUCH OLDER THAN YOU WHEN I PUT THIS COSTUME ON. WHEN I DECIDED TO GET BACK UP.
"BUT...I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING. SOMETHING NO ONE EVER GAVE ME..."
...A CHOICE.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW IT'S OKAY IF YOU CAN'T GET UP RIGHT NOW.
THAT... IT'S OKAY IF YOU CAN'T FACE WHAT'S COMING.
I KNOW... I KNOW MR. FANTASTIC AND THE OTHERS KEEP SAYING YOU ARE OUR ONLY WAY OUT OF THIS. THAT YOUR POWERS CAN TURN THE TIDE...
"I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S TRUE. I STOPPED TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD THE FIRST TIME I SAW IT BOUNCE BACK FROM THE WORST THINGS IMAGINABLE.
"I'VE SEEN US WIN. TIME AND TIME AGAIN. AGAINST MONSTERS AND DEVILS AND GODS...MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT..."

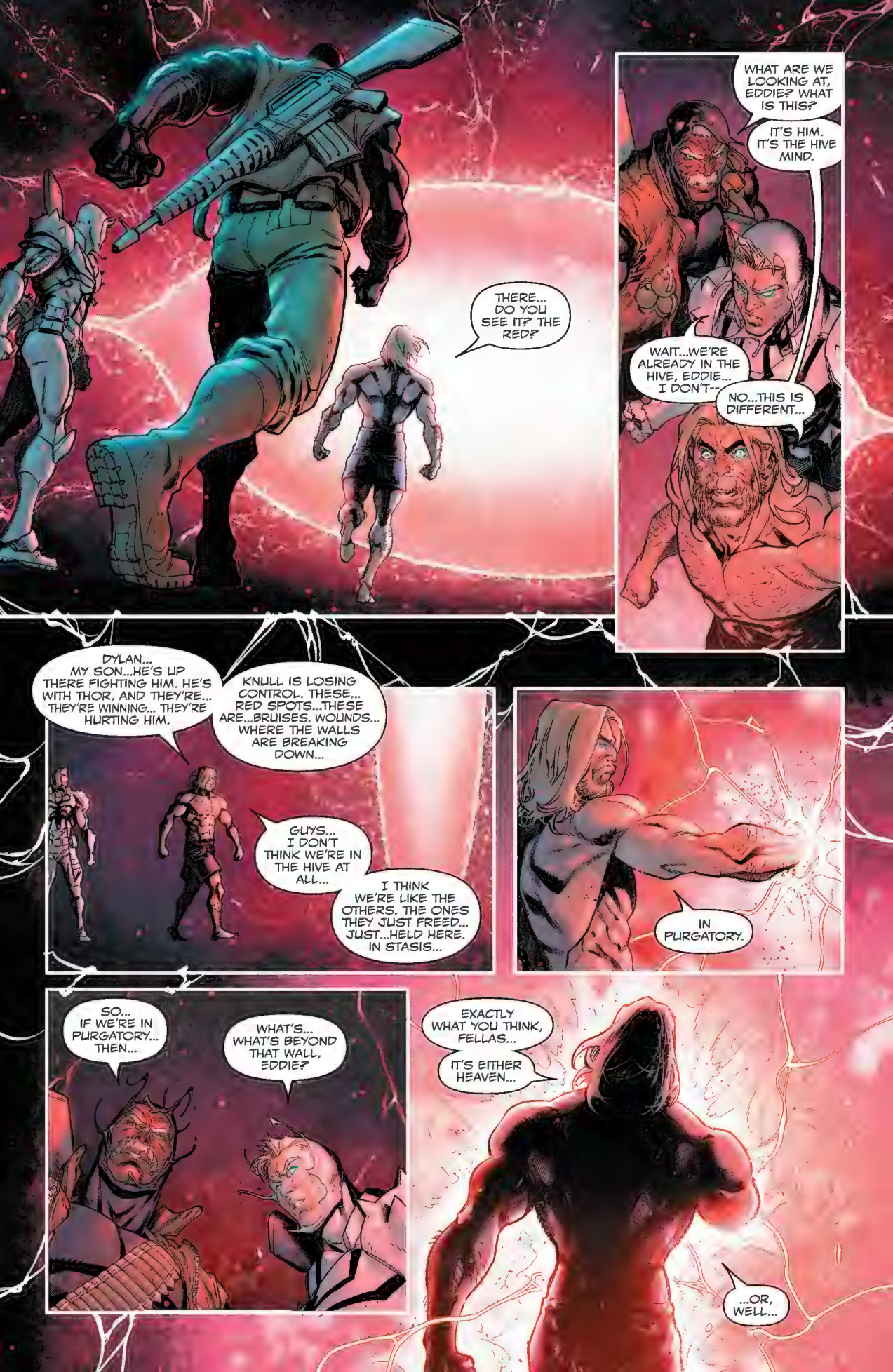
AND I KNOW, IN MY HEART OF HEARTS, THAT WE CAN OVERCOME THIS. AND NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE SAYS...WE CAN DO IT WITHOUT YOU...IF WE HAVE TO.
SO I NEED YOU TO TRUST ME. I NEED YOU TO BE BRAVE.
"AND...UNDERSTAND THAT SOMETIMES BEING BRAVE MEANS ADMITTING THAT YOU'RE SCARED. THAT YOU NEED HELP.
"IT TOOK ME A LONG TIME TO LEARN THAT, BUT..."
...YOUR FATHER TOLD ME TO TAKE CARE OF YOU.
SO, DYLAN, LISTEN TO ME. PLEASE. TRUST ME.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS. I WILL PROTECT YOU IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO OUT THERE.
"I WILL PROTECT YOU FROM THE WORLD."
EVERYONE READY?
DYLAN, DO YOU NEED A--
I NEED...
...TO HURT SOMETHING.

AGHH!
REX, WHAT'S GOING ON? IS HE--
I DON'T KNOW.
EDDIE, WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT'S WRONG, SON?
I...DON'T KNOW... SOMETHING... SOMETHING IS WRONG...
I CAN'T...
HEY, COME ON. LET'S GET YOU--
FLASH...HOW...HOW ARE YOU HERE? I--I THOUGHT--
MY CODEX DIED AFTER YOU WORE IT?
YEAH...
DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT. JUST BECAUSE IT WAS LOST TO YOU, DOESN'T MEAN I WAS LOST.
WE ALL END UP BACK HERE. BACK IN THE HIVE.
LUCKY FOR YOU.
SO...DID YOU...
HEAR WHAT YOU SAID AT MY GRAVE? ABOUT ME BEING THE BETTER VENOM AND A BETTER MAN AND THE GREATEST HERO TO EVER--
I DON'T THINK THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I--
NOPE. I WAS THERE. HEARD EVERY WORD. I THINK I ACTUALLY SAW A TEAR OR TWO IF I'M NOT MISTAK--
FLASH. IT WAS A TOUGH TIME FOR ME, OKAY? I DON'T NEED--
EDDIE...

ALL KIDDING ASIDE...
IT, UH... IT MEANT A LOT TO ME, MAN. THAT... I WASN'T FORGOTTEN. THAT I STILL... WELL, THAT I HAD DONE SOME GOOD OUT THERE.
I MEAN THAT, ED.
THANK YOU.
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU, FLASH.
NOW, HOW THE HELL DO WE GET OUT OF--
AGHHH!
EDDIE! WHAT'S GOING ON!
IT'S KNULL!
SOMETHING IS HAPPENING. IT'S LIKE I'M CONNECTED TO HIM SOMEHOW...
...AND I-- I CAN FEEL IT... SOMETHING...
SOMETHING IS HURTING HIM.
KNULL? WHAT IS IT? WHAT COULD HURT HIM LIKE THAT?!
HEH...

"...MY BOY."


UM... GUYS?
WHAT...WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THEM? ALL THE HEROES KNULL HAS TAKEN OVER...THEY'RE DISAPPEARING!
IT'S... DYLAN. HE'S...
...HE'S FREEING THEM!
OH MY GOD. LOOK...
HE DID IT... HE ACTUALLY DID IT...
GO GET 'EM, CAP.
FLASH... REX...
LOOK...


THERE... DO YOU SEE IT? THE RED?
WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT, EDDIE? WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S HIM. IT'S THE HIVE MIND.
WAIT...WE'RE ALREADY IN THE HIVE, EDDIE... I DON'T--
NO...THIS IS DIFFERENT...
DYLAN... MY SON...HE'S UP THERE FIGHTING HIM. HE'S WITH THOR, AND THEY'RE... THEY'RE WINNING... THEY'RE HURTING HIM.
KNULL IS LOSING CONTROL. THESE... RED SPOTS...THESE ARE...BRUISES. WOUNDS... WHERE THE WALLS ARE BREAKING DOWN...
GUYS... I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN THE HIVE AT ALL...
I THINK WE'RE LIKE THE OTHERS. THE ONES THEY JUST FREED... JUST...HELD HERE. IN STASIS...
IN PURGATORY.
SO... IF WE'RE IN PURGATORY... THEN...
WHAT'S... WHAT'S BEYOND THAT WALL, EDDIE?
EXACTLY WHAT YOU THINK, FELLAS...
IT'S EITHER HEAVEN...
...OR, WELL...

...HELL.

OH MY GOD...

WHAT... WHAT IS THIS?

THIS IS IT...THE CENTER.

THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM THAT CONNECTS ALL OF THE SYMBIOTES IN THE UNIVERSE...

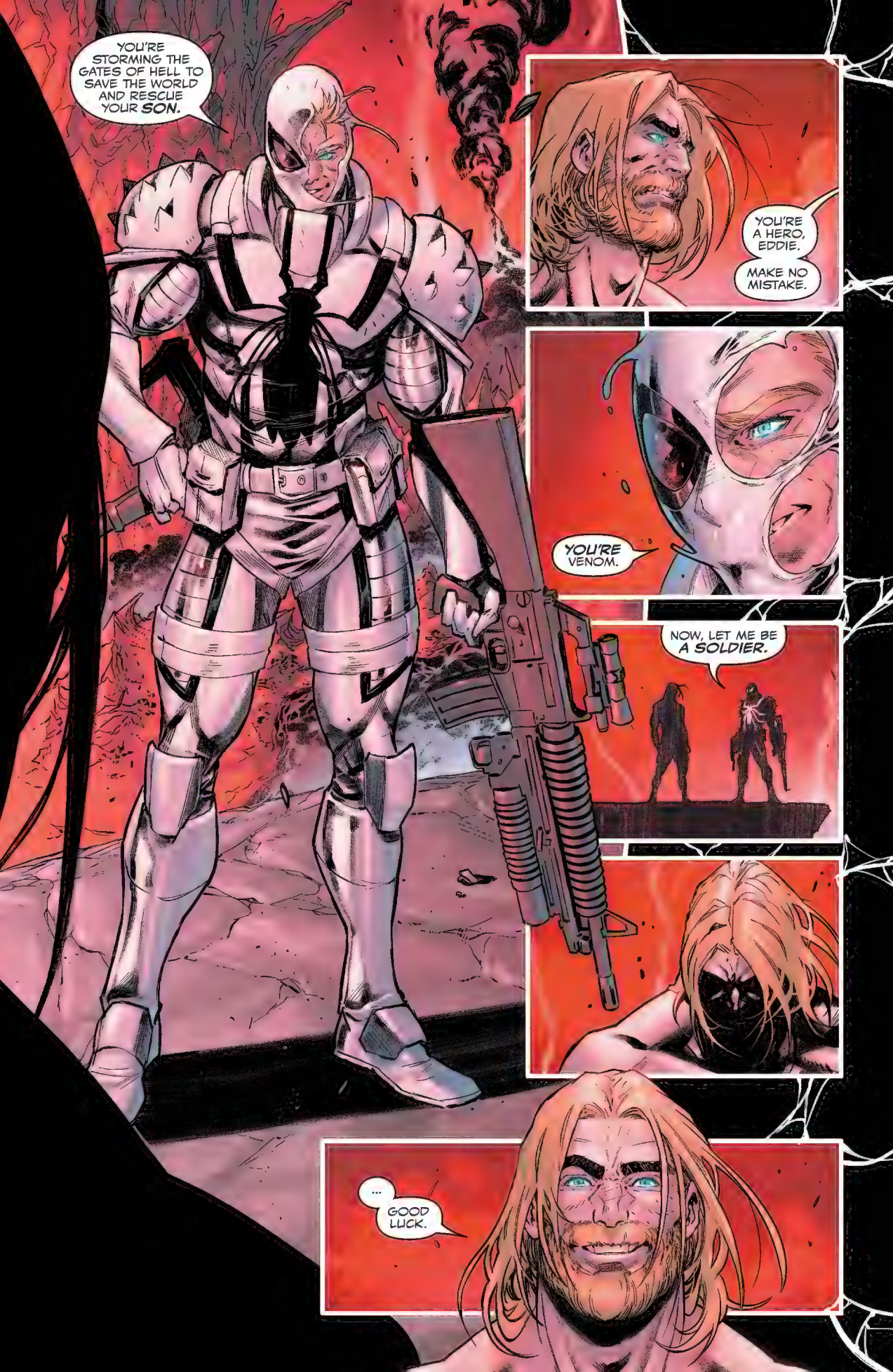
...THE EYE AT THE CENTER OF THE STORM...

...THE GOD HIVE.

ALMIGHTY... I HAD NO IDEA...
THIS IS TOO MUCH, EDDIE. WHAT...WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
WHAT WE CAME HERE TO DO.
LOOK...
...THOSE SYMBIOTES. THE ONES IN CAGES...
THEY'VE BEEN CUT OFF FROM THE HIVE. THEIR CONNECTION SEVERED BY DYLAN AND THOR ABOVE...
THERE'S A REASON KNULL IS KEEPING THEM CAGED...
THEY'RE FREE OF HIS INFLUENCE. IF WE CAN GET TO THEM, I THINK WE CAN BOND WITH THEM. THE WAY MY SYMBIOTE IS ABLE TO ABSORB FLASH'S CODEX...
WE CAN PILOT THEM OUT OF HERE. BACK TO THE FIGHT.
HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS?
I...I DON'T KNOW. IT'S A FEELING.
THIS PLACE... I'M CLOSE TO MY OTHER. I THINK IT'S TRYING TO REACH OUT TO ME.
TO HELP US.

THAT'S A SUICIDE MISSION, ED.
I KNOW. IT SOUNDS INSANE, BUT--
NO, IT IS INSANE. WE BREAK THOSE SYMBIOTES OUT, KNULL'S GONNA NOTICE... WE CAN'T--
I'LL GO.
FLASH... NO. WE CAN ALL--
THIS IS WHAT REX WANTED ME FOR IN THE BEGINNING, RIGHT? HOW THIS ALL STARTED?
WHEN HE FOUND YOU, HE WAS LOOKING FOR ME. TO GO AND FREE THE SYM-SOLDIERS FROM THAT CONVOY. TO BREAK THEM OUT...
BUT I WASN'T THERE.
AND YOU... YOU STEPPED UP, EDDIE. YOU DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.
AND IT'S LED TO ALL OF THIS.
THIS IS MY MISSION.
IT WAS ALWAYS SUPPOSED TO BE MINE.

LET ME DO IT, ED.
YOU GET TO YOUR SYMBIOTE AND END THIS SON OF A %#$@.
FLASH... NO, YOU--
I HAD MY TURN. THIS IS YOUR SHOW NOW.
YOU DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS! YOU'RE A HERO, FLASH, I'M NOT--
STOP IT.
THAT'S ENOUGH WITH THIS ALREADY.
YOU... YOU'RE ALWAYS QUESTIONING YOURSELF...ALWAYS DOUBTING IF YOU'RE A GOOD GUY OR A BAD GUY...
YOU THINK YOU AREN'T GOOD ENOUGH TO BE A HERO?
LOOK AROUND, ED. LOOK AT HOW FAR YOU'VE COME! YOU'VE FACED THE DARKEST EVIL IN THE GALAXY AND BEATEN IT BACK.
YOU'VE DEFIED EVERY CHALLENGE THAT'S EVER BEEN PUT IN FRONT OF YOU. SO YOU HAVE A DARK PAST? WELL, JOIN THE CLUB...
EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES. I DAMN SURE KNOW I HAVE...
YOU MAY NOT THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO STAND NEXT TO CAP AND SPIDEY AND THE REST, BUT... EDDIE...


YOU'RE STORMING THE GATES OF HELL TO SAVE THE WORLD AND RESCUE YOUR SON.
YOU'RE A HERO, EDDIE.
MAKE NO MISTAKE.
YOU'RE VENOM.
NOW, LET ME BE A SOLDIER.
...
GOOD LUCK.

HEHE...
LUCK HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT, BUD.
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING, BROCK.
YEAH...
"...ME TOO."
RATATAT
ALL RIGHT, THOMPSON...LAST SECONDS ON THE CLOCK...ONE PLAY LEFT...
TATATATAT
WHAT DO YOU DO?! WHAT DO YOU--
TATATATA
AGH!!!
CLINK
HAIL MARY IT IS!

BOOOOM!
NO!
HELL YEAH.
"EDDIE, DAMMIT, LOOK! THEY'RE KILLING HIM!"
AGGHH!
NO...
HHHAAHAHA!
LET'S GO!

"...IT'S WORKING."
BOOOOOM

HE DID IT!
REX, FLASH BROKE THE SYMBIOTES OUT. HE DOWNLOADED HIS CODEX INTO ONE OF THEM, AND NOW HE'S UP THERE, FIGHTING!
COME ON. THIS IS IT...
...THIS IS OUR CHANCE!
WE WON'T HAVE MUCH TIME BEFORE KNULL SEES WHAT WE'RE DOING, SO LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE NEXT, AND I'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND--
AGH!
REX! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! HELP ME!
OH, I'M AFRAID YOUR FRIEND REX IS GONE.
NOW, EDDIE...

...WHY DOES THIS FEEL SO FAMILIAR?

VENOM #31 VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN & FRANK MARTIN

VENOM #32 VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN & FRANK MARTIN

VENOM #33 VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN & JASON KEITH

VENOM #34 VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN & JASON KEITH

VENOM #34

RISE

FLASH THOMPSON WAS A BULLY.
THEN HE WAS A SOLDIER.
THEN A SUPER HERO.
AND THEN HE WAS DEAD.
NOW HE'S A DRAGON...

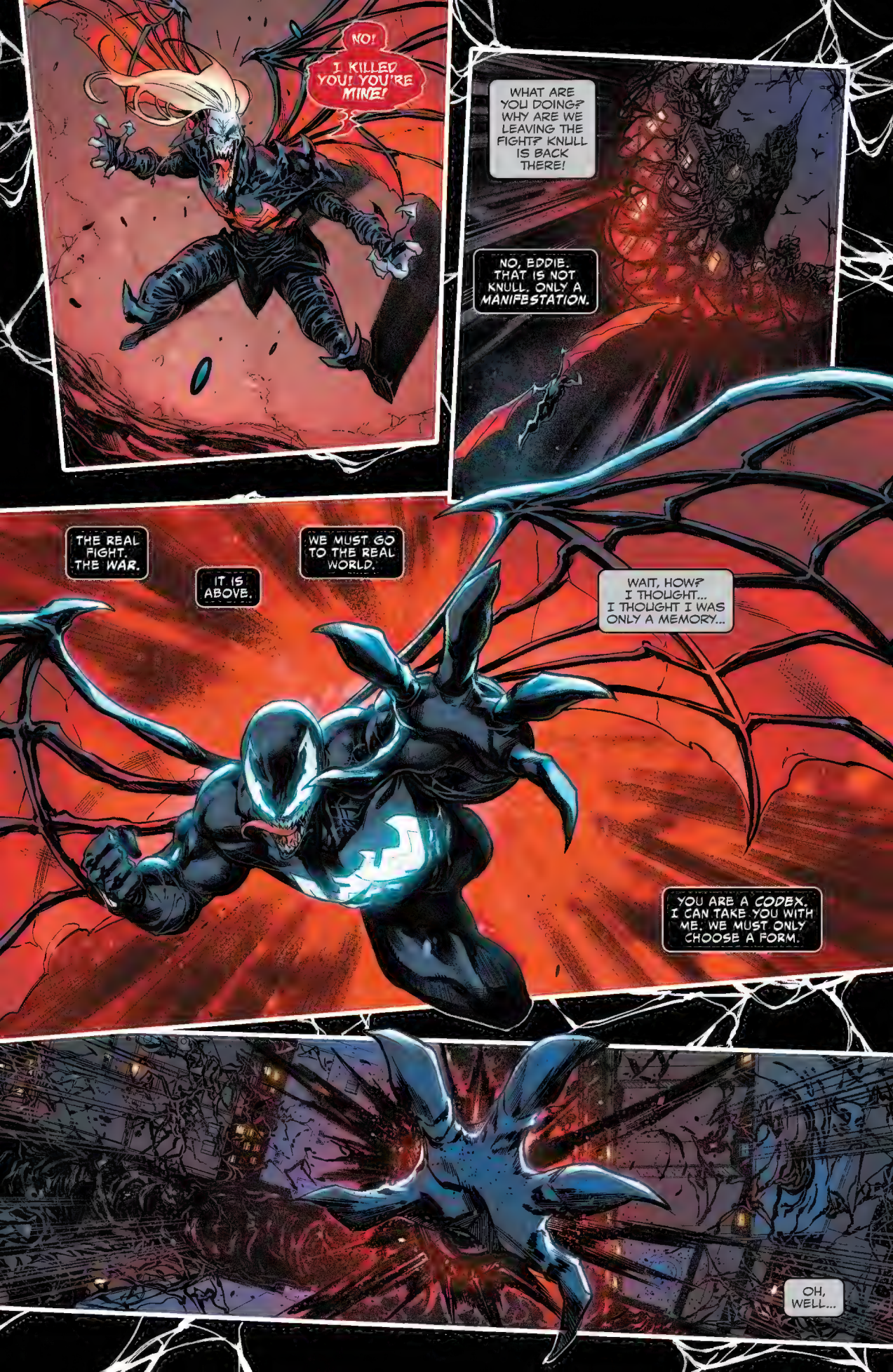
ME? EDDIE BROCK? I'M A GHOST.
TRAPPED AS A MEMORY OF WHO I ONCE WAS, INSIDE OF A SYMBIOTE HIVE MIND COVERING THE ENTIRE WORLD.
LITTLE HOST...
FIGHTING THE MANIFESTATION OF THEIR GOD IN AN UNDERWORLD HELL.
SO, SUFFICE TO SAY...
...DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULDN'T FIND YOU WITHIN MY OWN DOMAIN? DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD WIN?
N-NO...
...I'VE GIVEN UP ON THINGS MAKING SENSE.
KRAK
...BUT EVERYTHING'S WORTH A SHOT, RIGHT?
HEH.
LIKE I TOLD YOU SO LONG AGO...
...I AM NOT REALLY HERE, HOST.

I AM ABOVE. IN YOUR WORLD.
N-NO! GET... OFF!
AND SOON, IT WILL BE MINE.
I WILL RIP THE LIGHT OUT OF IT AS A STILL-BEATING HEART...
AS I HAVE DONE...TO YOU...
...AND...
...TO YOUR SON.
NO! PLEASE!
NO!

EVERY MOMENT IN MY LIFE REPEATS ITSELF.
WHEN I WALKED INTO THAT CHURCH...
...THE WORLD FELL BLACK DOWN AROUND ME.
AND THEN...I WAS BEATEN. TIME AND TIME AGAIN...
...LIKE WHEN I WAS A CHILD.
AND NOW...
...THOSE SINS, THAT DARKNESS, THAT LIVED INSIDE ME...
...THAT HAVE NOW RAINED DOWN ON THE EARTH LIKE THEY DID ON ME ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

...IT WILL START AGAIN. WITH THE WORLD. WITH MY SON.
IT'S ALL PART OF THE CYCLE.
ASHES...
...TO ASHES...
DUST... TO D--
EDDIE! ARE YOU THERE?! CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
KNULL! HE IS DISTRACTED IN THE WORLD ABOVE!
FOUND YOU, EDDIE!
YOU... YOU BROKE FREE...
YOU... FOUND ME...
ALWAYS.
WE ARE TOGETHER AGAIN, EDDIE...

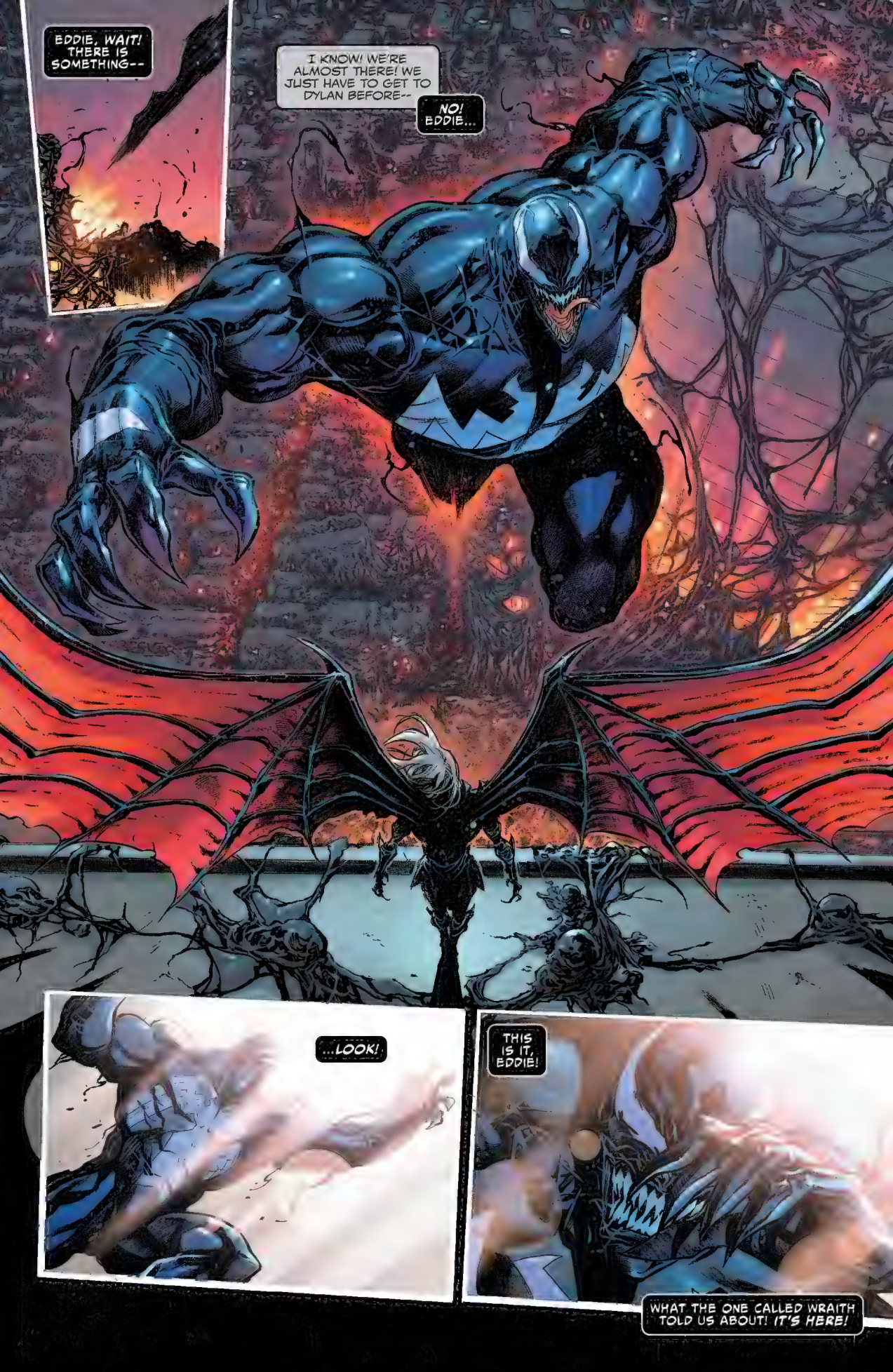
NO!
WE ARE
VENOM!


NO!
I KILLED YOU! YOU'RE MINE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHY ARE WE LEAVING THE FIGHT? KNULL IS BACK THERE!
NO, EDDIE. THAT IS NOT KNULL. ONLY A MANIFESTATION.
THE REAL FIGHT. THE WAR.
IT IS ABOVE.
WE MUST GO TO THE REAL WORLD.
WAIT, HOW? I THOUGHT... I THOUGHT I WAS ONLY A MEMORY...
YOU ARE A CODEX. I CAN TAKE YOU WITH ME. WE MUST ONLY CHOOSE A FORM.
OH, WELL...

...WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME I STOLE AN IDEA FROM ANOTHER GUY WHO CALLED HIMSELF VENOM.*

*CHECK OUT VENOM INC. (2018) TO SEE WHAT EDDIE'S REFERENCING! --EDITOR

EDDIE? HOLY @#$%, MAN! IS THAT YOU?
US.
AND YES.
GEEZ. OKAY, BIG GUY. POINT ME WHERE YOU NEED ME. I CAN PROVIDE COVER OR--
NO...
THIS IS BETWEEN ME AND KNULL. I HAVE TO SAVE MY BOY.
I NEED YOU ON THE GROUND.
ON THE GROUND... BUT MY PHYSICAL FORM IS IN A GRAVE... I CAN'T JUST...
YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO CLETUS WHEN HE GOT A DRAGON SYMBIOTE?
I DON'T... I WAS DEAD FOR THAT.
TRUST ME.
GO FIND OUT.
I GOT THIS.


EDDIE, WAIT! THERE IS SOMETHING--
I KNOW! WE'RE ALMOST THERE! WE JUST HAVE TO GET TO DYLAN BEFORE--
NO! EDDIE...
...LOOK!
THIS IS IT, EDDIE!
WHAT THE ONE CALLED WRAITH TOLD US ABOUT! IT'S HERE!

THE GOD OF LIGHT IS HERE!

I HAVE FELT HIM...

LIKE OUR KIND...BUT DIFFERENT...

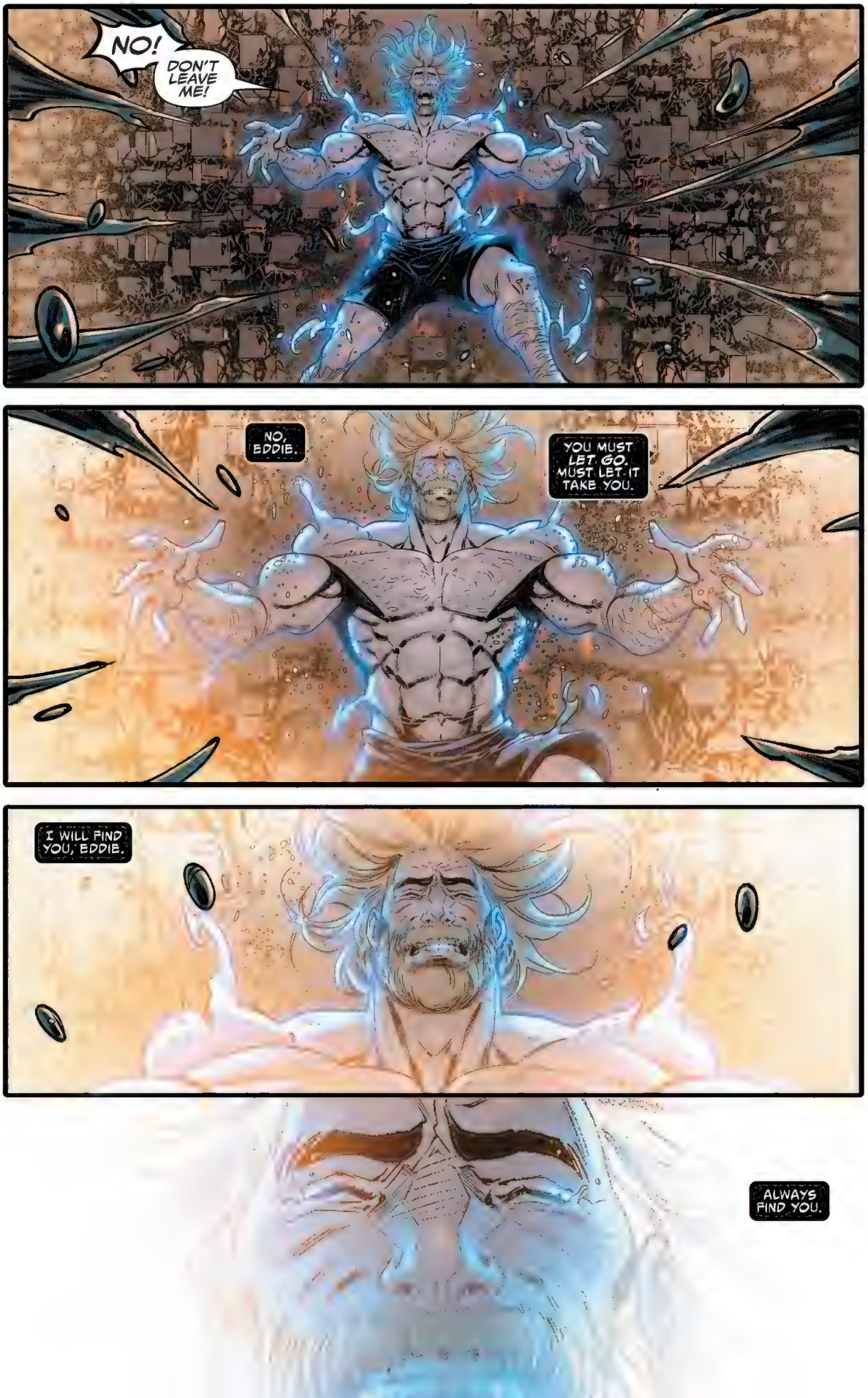
HIS LIGHT...

...APPROACHING...

...BLINDING...

...SCREAMING...

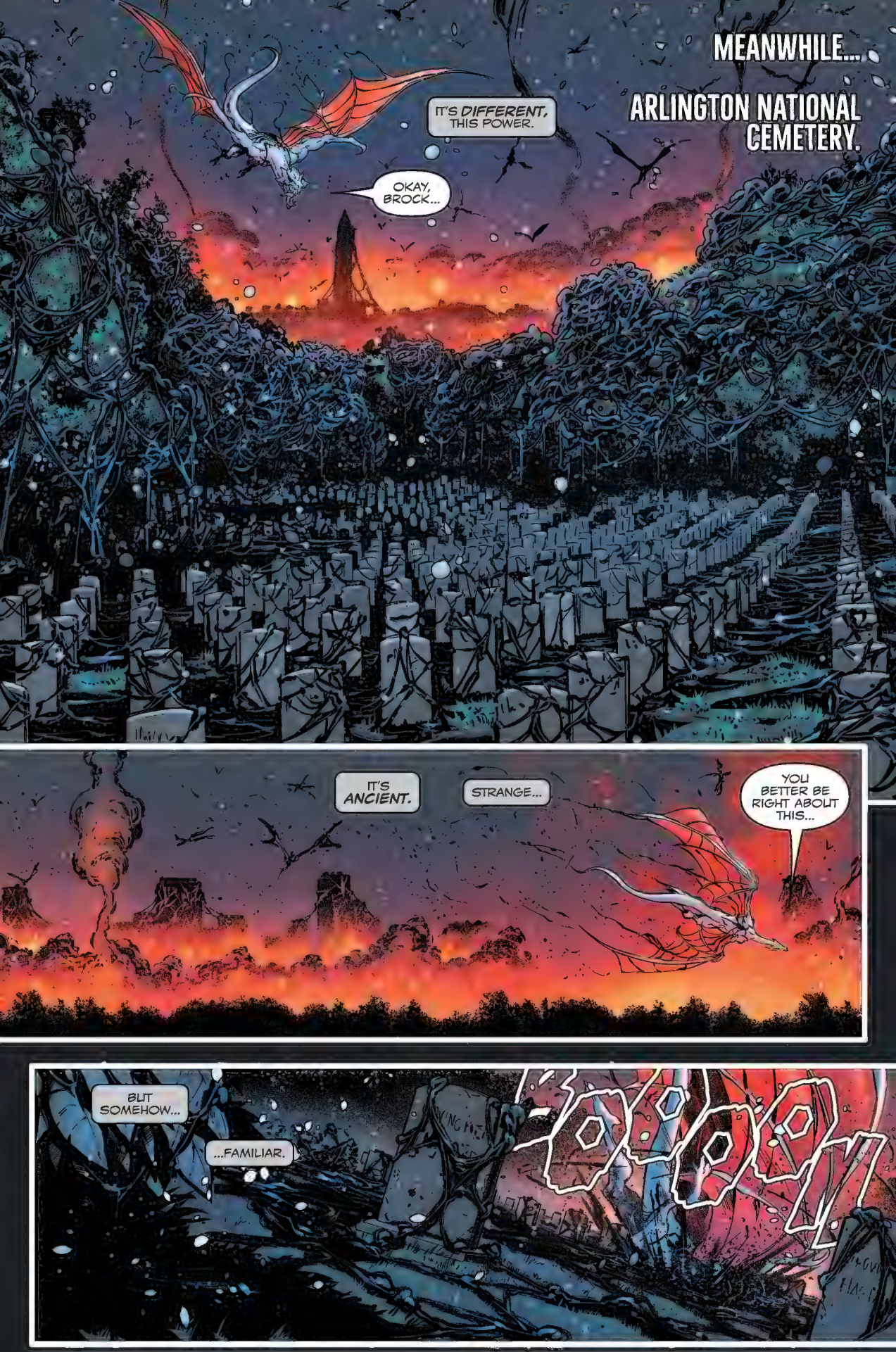
...ROARING!

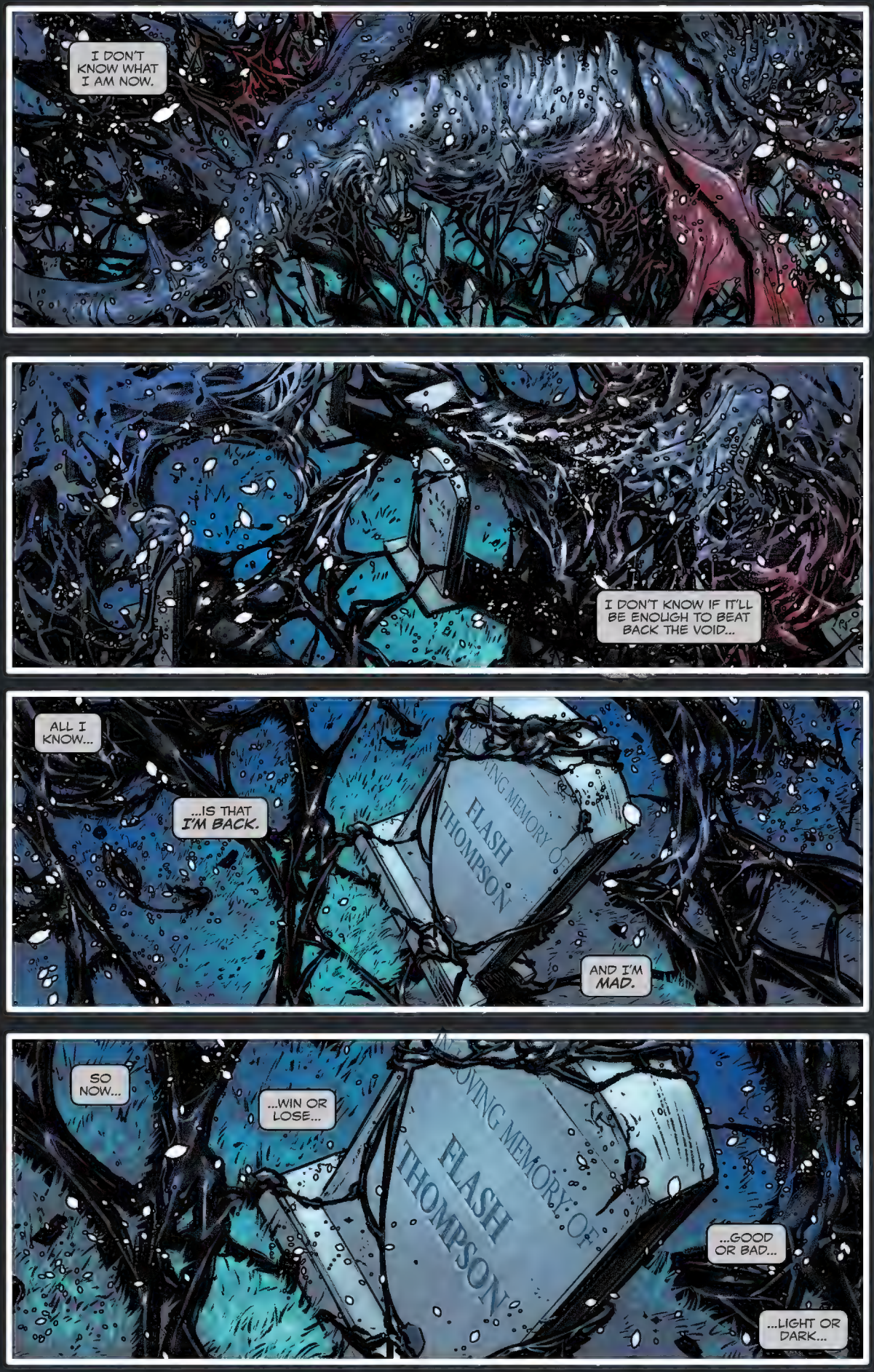

NO!
DON'T LEAVE ME!
NO, EDDIE.
YOU MUST LET GO. MUST LET IT TAKE YOU.
I WILL FIND YOU, EDDIE.
ALWAYS FIND YOU.

AGHHH!!
HGNN!
NO!

OH MY GOD...
JEAN... THESE READINGS... THIS ENERGY SOURCE.
YOU'RE RIGHT... IT BEHAVES JUST LIKE A SYMBIOTE. IT ALWAYS HAS...
THIS... GOD OF LIGHT...
I-- I KNOW WHAT IT IS.
WE ALL DO...
WE'VE JUST BEEN CALLING IT BY THE WRONG NAME...
HEH...
"CAPTAIN UNIVERSE."
...FINALLY...
...THE ENIGMA FORCE...
...SOLVED.
BOOM

I HEAR IT. IT CALLS TO ME.
TELLS ME I HAVE BEEN CHOSEN.
TELLS ME TO RISE.
TELLS ME TO CHOOSE MY NEW FORM.
I CAN BARELY HEAR IT OVER THE POWER OF THE LIGHT.
BUT I LAUGH AS IT ASKS ME...
...BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY EVER BEEN ONE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION...


MEANWHILE...
ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY.
IT'S DIFFERENT, THIS POWER.
OKAY, BROCK...
IT'S ANCIENT.
STRANGE...
YOU BETTER BE RIGHT ABOUT THIS...
BUT SOMEHOW...
...FAMILIAR.
KRAKOOM


I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM NOW.
I DON'T KNOW IF IT'LL BE ENOUGH TO BEAT BACK THE VOID...
ALL I KNOW...
...IS THAT I'M BACK.
FLASH THOMPSON
AND I'M MAD.
SO NOW...
...WIN OR LOSE...
FLASH THOMPSON
...GOOD OR BAD...
...LIGHT OR DARK...

...EVERYTHING IS ABOUT TO CHANGE.
EMORY OF
ASH

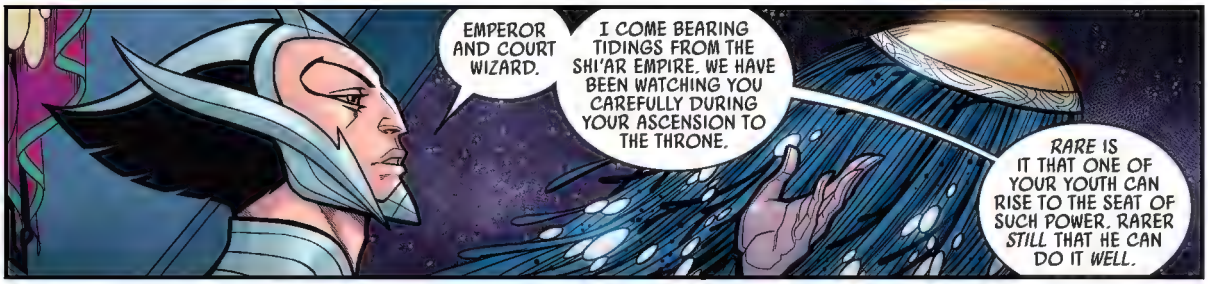
KING IN BLACK: WICCAN AND HULKLING

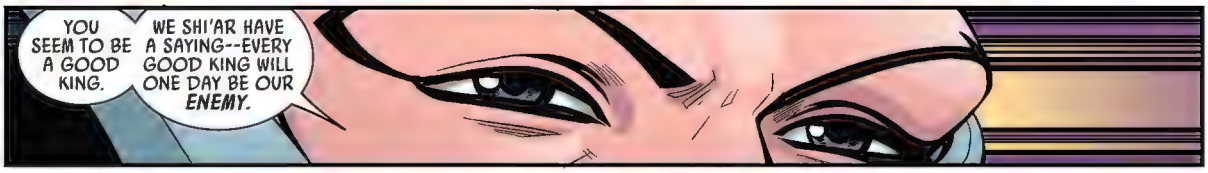
IN THE NAME OF THE HONEYMOON

THE OUTER REALM.
A CRY FOR HELP.
A DISTRESS SIGNAL.
BEFORE THE SYMBIOTES CAME, THE CREW HAD PUT OUT A CALL FOR BACKUP.
BACK WHEN THEY WERE SOLDIERS AND PILOTS. KREE AND SKRULL.
BACK WHEN THEY WERE *INDIVIDUALS*.
BUT THEY WERE NO LONGER THOSE PEOPLE, THOSE THINGS.
THEY WERE SOMETHING *ELSE* NOW.
SO A *DIFFERENT* GOD ANSWERED.

KNULL.
AND HE WOULD PERMIT NO OTHER GOD, MASTER, OR SOVEREIGN TO RULE IN HIS UNIVERSE.
MY PRECIOUS NEW SOLDIERS...
...BRING ME THE HEAD OF YOUR KING!
LORD EMPEROR?
HMM?
THE GUY WITH THE DIRT.
RIGHT.
CITIZEN CH'KRRT: BY THE POWER I WIELD AS EMPEROR, STAR-MARSHAL, AND FIRST SWORD OF THE KREE-SKRULL ALLIANCE, I WISH YOUR FARM WELL.
I HOPE YOUR CROPS ARE PLENTIFUL.
YOU AND YOURS CAN SLEEP KNOWING YOU ARE DEFENDED BY THE MIGHT OF OUR FLEETS.
MAZEL TOV!
HUZZAH!

HEY, WHAT'S THAT CODE WORD FOR WHEN ONE OF US IS READY TO *LEAVE* SOMEWHERE BUT DOESN'T WANT TO SAY IT OUT LOUD?
WE...DON'T HAVE ONE OF THOSE.
WE *SHOULD.*
SOON. I PROMISE, WE'LL BE DONE WITH THESE PROCEEDINGS REALLY SOON.
GOSH...
...I WISH I WERE A BOX OF DIRT SO I COULD GET SOME ATTENTION.
YOUR IMPERIAL MAJESTY?
YOUR FINAL APPOINTMENT HAS ARRIVED.
ALL RISE FOR THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE *SHI'AR EMPIRE*, VICE-CHANCELLOR T'KAO!


EMPEROR AND COURT WIZARD.
I COME BEARING TIDINGS FROM THE SHI'AR EMPIRE. WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING YOU CAREFULLY DURING YOUR ASCENSION TO THE THRONE.
RARE IS IT THAT ONE OF YOUR YOUTH CAN RISE TO THE SEAT OF SUCH POWER. RARER *STILL* THAT HE CAN DO IT *WELL*.


YOU SEEM TO BE A GOOD KING.
WE SHI'AR HAVE A SAYING--EVERY GOOD KING WILL ONE DAY BE OUR ***ENEMY***.

BUT TODAY IS NOT THAT DAY. TODAY, WE *CAN* CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ***WEDDING***.
IS THAT--

--A ROBOT THAT DISPENSES ***CHAMPAGNE?!***
IT IS MERELY MEANT TO *DELIVER* THE GIFT.
THE GIFT *ITSELF* AWAITS YOU ON THE BEAUTIFUL BEACHES OF THE SH'IAR HOMEWORLD --A SOLAR WEEK AT THE FINEST RESORT WE HAVE TO OFFER.

WHILE CHANDILAR ITSELF CAN BE QUITE BUSY, OUR PRIVATE BEACHES *ON LITTLE CHANDILAR* ARE VERY SECLUDED. YOU WILL BE TREATED AS THE KINGS YOU ARE, FREE OF CHARGE.
JUST YOU AND YOUR BELOVED. NO ONE ELSE NEEDED.

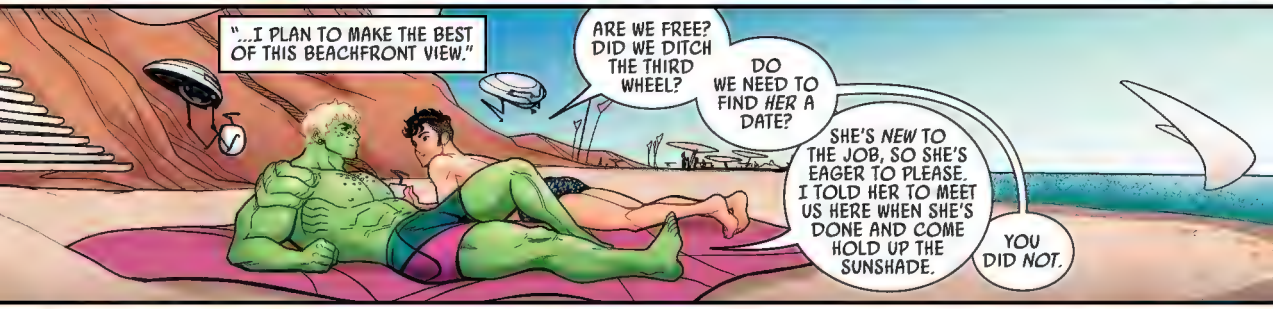
WHY, VICE-CHANCELLOR, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
SAY YES?
PLEASE SAY YES. MY LEGS ARE NUMB FROM THIS CHAIR.

HE'LL HAVE TO DECLINE, VICE-CHANCELLOR.
LAURI-ELL?!
BRAVE EMPEROR, MY FOREMOST CONCERN IS YOUR SAFETY.
I HAVE REASON TO SUSPECT THIS MIGHT NOT BE IN YOUR BEST INTEREST.
EXPLAIN.
BY HALA, THINK, MY LORD!
WHY WOULD THEY OFFER HOSPITALITY TO JUST YOU AND YOUR BELOVED IF NOT TO REMOVE YOU FROM YOUR OWN SECURITY DETAIL?
THE SHI'AR ARE FIERCE TACTICIANS. IT COULD BE A TRAP!
FORGIVE ME, MADAM ACCUSER...
...BUT I'D LIKE TO THINK SHI'AR STRATEGY IS SLIGHTLY MORE ADVANCED.
AND I BELIEVE EARTHLINGS HAVE A CUSTOM FOR SUCH A GIFT...A "HONEY-MOON"?
YES, AND WE ARE ABSOLUTELY GOING TO ACCEPT.
EXCELLENT. AND AS I ABSOLUTELY UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO PERSONALLY SEE TO YOUR EMPEROR'S PROTECTION...
...WE'LL HAVE ACCOMMODATIONS PREPARED FOR THREE.
...THREE?

OH WOW.
STARBEACHES, LITTLE CHANDILAR.
I ABSOLUTELY WANT TO KEEP ONE OF THESE CHAMPAGNE ROBOTS.
DID YOU KNOW THOSE WERE INVENTED BY SUNSPOT? I THINK HE SOLD THE PATENT OUT HERE OR SOMETHING, BUT WE CAN JUST GET ONE BACK ON EARTH.
BUT HERE IT LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE OUR OWN VERY PRIVATE BEACH.
DON'T YOU GRIN LIKE THAT. YOU WANTED TO STAY HOME.
I DID NOT. I JUST HAVE TO CONSIDER THE OPTICS OF EVERYTHING NOW.
DOES IT LOOK WEAK TO ACCEPT THE SHI'AR GIFT?
DOES IT ANGER ANY OF OUR OTHER ALLIES? EVERYTHING'S A CHESS MOVE NOW.
YOU'RE THE BELOVED NEW KING.
YOU'VE USHERED IN AN ERA OF PEACE.
GOOD JOB. WORK DONE FOR THE WEEK.
NOW, WE ARE ON OUR HONEY-MOON.
I'M PLACING AN ORDER FOR A PRISM-SHRIMP COCKTAIL, TWO ZERO-G GELATO WHIPS, AND SOME DRINK SERVED IN A FRUIT I'VE NEVER HEARD OF.
IT'LL TAKE ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES TO GET HERE. SO IF YOU STILL FEEL THE URGE TO GET SOME WORK DONE...
...YOUR COURT WIZARD WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH YOU IN PRIVATE.

MY LIEGE!
I HAVE DEPOSITED YOUR LUGGAGE AND PASSED THE SHIP TO THE VALET. MY HANDS ARE NOW YOURS TO COMMAND.
LAURI-ELL. HELLO!

YOURS WEREN'T *REALLY* THE SET OF HANDS I WAS CONCERNED WITH, BUT *THANK YOU FOR THE UPDATE.*
THAT WAS VERY KIND OF YOU TO BRING ALL OF OUR THINGS IN.
LET'S ALL TAKE A MOMENT TO GET SETTLED AND CHANGE OUT OF OUR TRAVEL CLOTHES. *FOR MY PART...*


"...I PLAN TO MAKE THE BEST OF THIS BEACHFRONT VIEW."
ARE WE FREE? DID WE DITCH THE THIRD WHEEL?
DO WE NEED TO FIND *HER* A DATE?
SHE'S *NEW* TO THE JOB, SO SHE'S EAGER TO PLEASE. I TOLD HER TO MEET US HERE WHEN SHE'S DONE AND COME HOLD UP THE SUNSHADE.
YOU DID *NOT.*

SO *LORDLY.* IS SHE GONNA FAN US TOO, *EMPEROR HULKLING?*
I *SWEAR* TO YOU, SHE WAS *THRILLED* AT THE PROSPECT. SHE WANTS TO *HELP.*
SURE, SURE!

WHAT.
WHAT?!
NOTHING! THAT'S JUST...
...*VERY IMPERIAL* OF YOU. YOU'RE TAKING TO THIS LIKE A DUCK TO WATER!

FOR SOMEONE WHO BEGGED ME TO TAKE THIS VACATION, YOU'RE SURE PICKING ON ME A LOT.
PLAYGROUND RULES.
JUST MEANS I *LIKE* YA.

OH, THE SHADE'S HERE.
HI LAURI-ELL. YOU DON'T REALLY HAVE TO HOLD THE SUN-SHADE, I WAS KIDDING.
ONE THOUSAND PARDONS, EMPEROR...
...BUT THAT IS NOT I.
HONEY? BABY. BABE.
PLEASE LOOK UP. PLEASE.
SKREE
ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY, INSIDE! PANTS BACK ON!
NOT WHAT I WANTED TO HEAR TODAY!

HEY, WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?
ONE MOMENT, I'M SO SORRY, IF YOU COULD JUST LEAVE YOUR ROOM NUMBER HERE, WE'LL SEND SOMEONE RIGHT UP.
NO, NO, NOT LIKE THAT.
WE WANT TO *HELP*. WE'RE VISITING DIGNITARIES BUT ALSO, YOU KNOW... SUPER HEROES.
SHOULD WE REPORT TO THE ***IMPERIAL GUARD*** OR WHAT?
OH THANK *SHARRA AND K'YTHRI*! USUALLY THEY SEND YOU SUPER HERO TYPES TO *BIG* CHANDILAR.
WAIT, YOU'RE NOT *X-MEN*, ARE YOU?
NEVER MIND.
I'LL TELL YOU THIS: IF THE SOURCE OF THAT SUDDEN BLACKOUT UP THERE IS AS BAD AS IT SOUNDS? THE IMPERIAL GUARD ARE DEFINITELY DEPLOYED *ELSEWHERE*, AND WE ARE NOT ON THEIR LIST.
WHAT DO YOU DO IF THERE'S AN EMERGENCY ON LITTLE CHANDILAR?
...CONTACT THE IMPERIAL GUARD.
AND WAIT.
THE *WHOLE PLANET* IS JUST A RESORT? DO YOU HAVE *SECURITY*?
I CAN TRY AND GET YOU AN ASSISTANT MANAGER?
THERE ISN'T REALLY A *GOVERNMENT*...
BUT UNLESS ONE OF YOUR SUPER-POWERS IS ANSWERING PHONES, YOU'RE PROBABLY NEEDED *ELSEWHERE* RIGHT NOW TOO.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THESE PEOPLE'S BOSSES WOULD JUST HAVE THEM TAKE *PHONE CALLS* WHILE THIS IS HAPPENING!
I DON'T WANT A REFUND, I WANT THEM TO SURVIVE A DRAGON ATTACK!
I KNOW THEY SAID WE DON'T HAVE TO PAY FOR ANY-THING, BUT--
YES, BILLY, WE'RE GOING TO TIP *REALLY* WELL.
IS *SAVING THEIR LIVES* NOT PAYMENT ENOUGH?
LAURI, I KNOW YOU MEAN WELL? BUT IT'S CLEAR YOU'VE NEVER HAD A JOB WHERE YOU NEEDED TIPS IF YOU THINK THAT'S TRUE.
UP HERE. I WANNA GET TO THE ROOF.
I THINK WE CAN GET A BETTER LOOK AT WHAT'S GOING ON.
ANOTHER GIANT BLACK DRAGON FILLING THE SKY. OKAY.
WHERE DO YOU THINK THEY'RE ***COMING*** FROM?
WHO KNOWS, BUT THE WAY THE DESK CLERK WAS TALKING, IT SEEMS LIKE THIS PROBLEM IS MORE THAN JUST LOCAL.
WE NEED TO GET YOU OFF-PLANET *IMMEDIATELY*, YOUR MAJESTY.
TO THE HANGAR-- WE CAN BOARD YOUR SHIP--
NO, NO, THAT WON'T WORK.
IT MIGHT NOT BE SAFE TO GO THROUGH THE HOTEL NOW!
LET HIM STAY HERE WITH ME. WE'LL WAIT HERE UNTIL YOU RETURN WITH THE SHIP AND BOARD FROM THE ROOF!
VERY WELL.

THERE SHE GOES.
THAT WAS MEAN. SHE REALLY THOUGHT YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT MY SAFETY.
I AM! SOMETIMES.
YOU WANNA FIGHT A DRAGON?
I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK.
FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT YOU SET THIS WHOLE THING UP.
GETTING TO SUPER-HERO OUT ON OUR HONEYMOON IS ALMOST TOO PERFECT.
I ALMOST ASKED YOU THE SAME THING!
IWANTTO LIGHTTHEWAY IWANTTOLIGHT THEWAYIWANT TOLIGHTTHE WAY---
OH MY GOD.
WHOA. THAT'S A LOT OF DRAGONS.
LET'S HOPE THEY GO DOWN AS EASY AS THOSE TIKI DRINKS.
BILLY, LOOK OUT!

SKREE
THIS THING IS HUGE.
AND HUNGRY-- BACK OFF!
SLURP
YEAH?! YOU LIKE THAT?!
CHATHUNK
RRRRRR
OKAY, SETTLE DOWN!
I THINK IT'S COMING BACK FOR MORE-- IT'S MAD.
YEAH, IT'S MAD AT YOU!
FWKWOOSHH
I WANTED CHAMPAGNE! I STILL WANT CHAMPAGNE!
IWANT CHAMPAGNE IWANTCHAMPAGNE IWANTCHAMPAGNE IWANT--

AAAAH!
WHAT ABOUT MY STUFF?!
PLEASE FILE TO THE HANGARS IN AN ORDERLY FASHION, WHERE STARBEACHES EMPLOYEES WILL GUIDE YOU TO YOUR SAFETY POD.
BY HALA, THIS IS CHAOS!
AND IT WOULD SEEM THE VALETS HAVE ALL LEFT.
GET TO THE SHIPS!
BUT THE DRAGONS ARE EVERYWHERE!
TRACTOR BEAM ACTIVE. SHIP INCOMING.
GUESTS ARE REMINDED TO STAND CLEAR OF THE TRACTOR BEAM.
AND HAVE A PLEASANT STAY AT STAR-BEACHES, LITTLE CHANDILAR.
THAT SHIP...IT'S OF KREE MAKE.
COULD IT BE... RESCUE?
HAIL, FELLOW STAR-TRAVELERS?

SPLUTCH
AAAAAH!
SHHH
WOULD I HAD THE TIME TO BREAK EACH OF YOU AGAINST MY HAMMER! BUT I MUST EVACUATE MY EMPEROR AND HIS BELOVED.
SO I WILL RELY ON MY SPEED RATHER THAN STRENGTH!
FOLLOW HERRR?
YES.
SHE CAN LEAD US TO--
--HIMMM.
DEATH TO THE FOOL WHO CALLS HIMSELF EMPEROR--
KNULL IS THE ONLY KING!

WELL. WE CLEARED THE ROOFTOP, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO BACK OUT THERE.
HERE'S TO MY *MAGICAL* TIMING.
YEAH.
IF YOU CAN REMEMBER IT IN TIME, *ALL* OF OUR NARROW ESCAPES COULD COME WITH A DRINK.
DO-YOU-NEED-A-LIGHT?
CLINK
JUST ONE MOMENT:
I'M THE *EMPEROR OF THE KREE-SKRULL ALLIANCE* AND ON A REMOTE PLANET UNDER SIEGE, I FEEL LIKE I SHOULD *CHECK IN WITH HOME.*
CLICK
YOUR MAJESTY.
WE'RE GETTING REPORTS OF THE ANCIENT ENTITY ***KNULL*** CLEAVING A PATH THROUGH SPACE WITH AN ARMY OF ***DRAGONS.*** COULD IT BE A SHI'AR TRAP? SHALL WE DEPLOY AN ATTACK FLEET?
ABSOLUTELY NOT! WE'RE NOT STARTING ANY MORE *WARS*, MUR-G'NN.
SIR?
TALOS HAD SOME PRETTY CONCERNING REPORTS FOR US FROM *HIS* MISSION, DIDN'T HE?* HIS WHOLE CREW WAS WIPED OUT. HE DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO BE *RESCUED*. I'M NOT SENDING MY PEOPLE INTO THAT.
WE'LL EVACUATE WITH LAURI-ELL AND EVERYONE *ELSE* ON THIS PLANET.
*IN *WEB OF VENOM: EMPYRE'S END #1!*
HEY BABE? I SEE A BUNCH OF PLEASURE SHIPS HERE, BUT I DOUBT THEY HAVE LIGHTSPEED CAPABILITY... HOW DO WE GET THEM OUT IN TIME?
YEAH, ONE SEC-- I THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.

MUR-G'NN, I'M SENDING COORDINATES FOR A SAFE LOCATION OUTSIDE OF THIS SYSTEM. SEND AN *ESCORT* FLEET TO MEET US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
DO *NOT* PROCEED PAST THE COORDINATES I SEND! WE DON'T KNOW HOW MANY OF THESE BLACK DRAGONS THERE ARE OR HOW THEY ATTACK.
THERE HAVE *GOT* TO BE ENOUGH SHIPS TO GET EVERYONE *OFF-PLANET,* AT LEAST.
IF IT CAN BREAK THE ATMOSPHERE, WE'RE PUTTING PEOPLE ON IT.
THEY'LL BOARD OUR SUPERIOR SHIPS AT THE RENDEZVOUS.
A *BOLD* PLAN, MY LIEGE.
BUT *BOLDNESS* IS SOMETHING OUR PEOPLE DO NOT SHY FROM.
I WILL ASSEMBLE THE ESCORT FLEET NOW. AND *PRAY* I DO NOT HAVE TO FOLLOW IT WITH GUNSHIPS.
SORRY I'M BRINGING A CROWD. I KNOW YOU WANTED TIME ALONE.
AND NOW I'M GOING TO ASK FOR YOUR HELP ASSEMBLING EVERYONE ON THIS RESORT PLANET.
CLIK
THAT'S OKAY.
WE'RE ALONE NOW...

MY LIEGE!
WHAM
LAURI-ELL-- IS THE SHIP READY?!
NO, I WAS STOPPED IN THE HANGAR BY--
SSSSSSSSSSRRRAAAGHH
HOLY @#$@$, IT'S A BUNCH OF VENOMS!
DIE, FOOLS!
SUDDENLY ALL THE BLACKOUTS MAKE MORE SENSE!
RAAHHH...
UGH!
BILLY!
NO!
BAABOOOM

TEDDY!
BILLY! I'M OKAY--I CAN HANDLE THINGS ON THIS SIDE--BUT YOU HAVE TO START EVACUATING EVERYONE!
I WON'T LEAVE YOU!
PLEASE, COURT WIZARD!
WE HAVE TO GET YOU BOTH OFF OF THIS PLANET.
AND LEAVE ALL THE DRAGONS AND SYMBIOTES TRAPPED IN THERE WITH MY HUSBAND?!
THE KING HAS ASKED US TO GO.
IF WE HURRY, WE CAN GET THE SHIP AND SWING AROUND TO PICK HIM UP FROM THE BEACH SIDE--THEN HEAD RIGHT FOR THE STARS. AND WE'LL HAVE ADDITIONAL FIREPOWER WITH THE SHIP'S GUNS.
YOU PROMISE?
I WOULD DIE BEFORE I LET HIM PERISH. THAT I PROMISE YOU.
WELL, WE HAVE THAT IN COMMON.
LET ME CATCH YOU UP--WE'VE GOT THIS PLAN TO EVACUATE THE WHOLE PLANET...

YOU DON'T WANT TO START A WAR WITH ME.
BACK. OFF.
BOY WHO CALLS HIMSELF KIIIING.
WAR IS ALREADY HEEERE, EMPEROR.
DEATH TO THE OTHER KINGS.
THERE IS ONLY ONE KING.
--KNULL.
NOT TODAY.
NOT ON MY HONEYMOON.
SSSSS!
RRRAH!
POOR KING. LITTLE KING.
LIGHTS OUT NOW.

FLIK!
DO-YOU-NEED-A-LIGHT?
WOOOOOOOSH
HOLY @#$%!
IT'S TALOS' CREW!

DID YOU SEE THAT?!
THOSE ARE OUR SOLDIERS. LOST SOLDIERS. LOST TO KNULL!
AV-ROM WAS A CAPTAIN!
TEDDY'S IN THERE.
KNULL MUST HAVE SENT THEM TO DESTROY THEIR OWN EMPEROR.
SUCH TACTICS ARE ANATHEMA TO BRAVE WARRIORS!
YES, I DEFINITELY AGREE--NOW PLEASE TAKE ME TO MY HUSBAND!
TEDDY! WE'RE EVACUATING--TAKE MY HAND!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! STAY BACK, THEY'RE STILL DANGEROUS!
THEY SURE ARE, BUT THEY'RE DISTRACTED BY FIRE CURRENTLY!
GET ON THIS SHIP RIGHT NOW!
THEY'RE MY SOLDIERS, BILLY.
I KNOW, LAURI-ELL SAID SO. I'M SORRY, BUT, LIKE...THEY'RE GONE, I THINK.
ZOMBIE RULES, MAN.
I DON'T THINK SO, BILLY.
COME ON, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING. PEOPLE BELIEVE IN ME. IN US.
WE'RE THEIR LEADERS. THEY FIGHT AND DIE FOR US.
LET'S BE THE BEST KINGS POSSIBLE.

THIS IS CRAZY...BUT I DO HAVE IDEAS, AND MY MAGIC WORKS PRETTY WELL OFF OF *IDEAS.*

AND I TRUST YOU.

SSSSSSS!

AAAH!

BILLY!

GET OFF OF HIM!

UNH!

IWANT [illegible]! IWANT [illegible]!

SLOSH
I WANT TO REPEL THE DARKNESS I WANT TO REPEL THE DARKNESS I WANT TO REPEL THE DARKNESS--
YOU DID IT--YOUR LIGHT REPELLED THE SYMBIOTE!
A DESPERATION MOVE. IT WON'T LAST FOR LONG. I CAN PROTECT THE TWO OF US, BUT...
WHAT ABOUT THE SOLDIERS? CAN YOU DO IT FOR THEM?
I CAN'T JUST CURE THEM, BUT WE CAN HOLD IT OFF UNTIL THEY GET HOME.
WE HAVE TO HURRY, BUT YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHANNEL MY LIGHT.
TRY IT.
I WANT TO BRING YOU ALL HOME TOO.
I WANT YOU TO HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE.

THEY'RE NOT DOING SO GREAT.
THEY'RE STABILIZED--THEY'LL NEED TO REST ON THE RIDE. I ASSUME YOUR SUPER SPACE SCIENTISTS CAN DO MORE TO *REMOVE* IT FOR GOOD?
I THINK SO. LET'S GET 'EM HOME.
WOOSH
MY LIEGE!
IT IS TIME TO GO.
TALOS' CREW!
YEAH, WE DID EXTRA CREDIT.
NOW TO JUST...ORGANIZE THE REST OF THE *PLANET* INTO AN EVACUATION FLEET.
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP. THERE ISN'T MUCH LEFT IN THE *TANK*, BUT...
...*THIS* MIGHT BE ALL WE NEED.

GUESTS AND RESIDENTS!
I WANT YOU TO GO TO THE NEAREST SHIP AND BOARD IT.
I REPEAT, GO TO THE NEAREST SHIP AND BOARD IT--
BA-DUM-BA-DUM
IN AN ORDERLY FASHION! IN AN ORDERLY FASHION!
AAAAAH
OKAY. THEY'RE HURRYING.
AND HOPEFULLY NOT TRAMPLING ONE ANOTHER.
I'LL BRING THE SHIP AROUND TO THE MAIN HANGAR-- DIRECT THEM THERE.
SURE THING, MADAM ACCUSER.
FOLLOW THE ALLIANCE SHIP TO SAFETY. REPEAT, FOLLOW US TO SAFETY...

DAMN THESE DRAGONS!
IT'S SO DARK!
THE SHIPS ARE UP AND FOLLOWING US, BUT THEY CAN HARDLY SEE.
BILLY, CAN YOU MAKE THE SHIP GLOW? I NEED A GIANT LANTERN, LIKE A SPOTLIGHT--
I DON'T THINK SO, BABY, I'M ON EMPTY. IF I DO ANY MORE MAGIC, I'LL--
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'M GOING OUT THERE.
ARE YOU CRAZY?!
FIRST OF ALL, I MARRIED A WIZARD. AND SECOND...

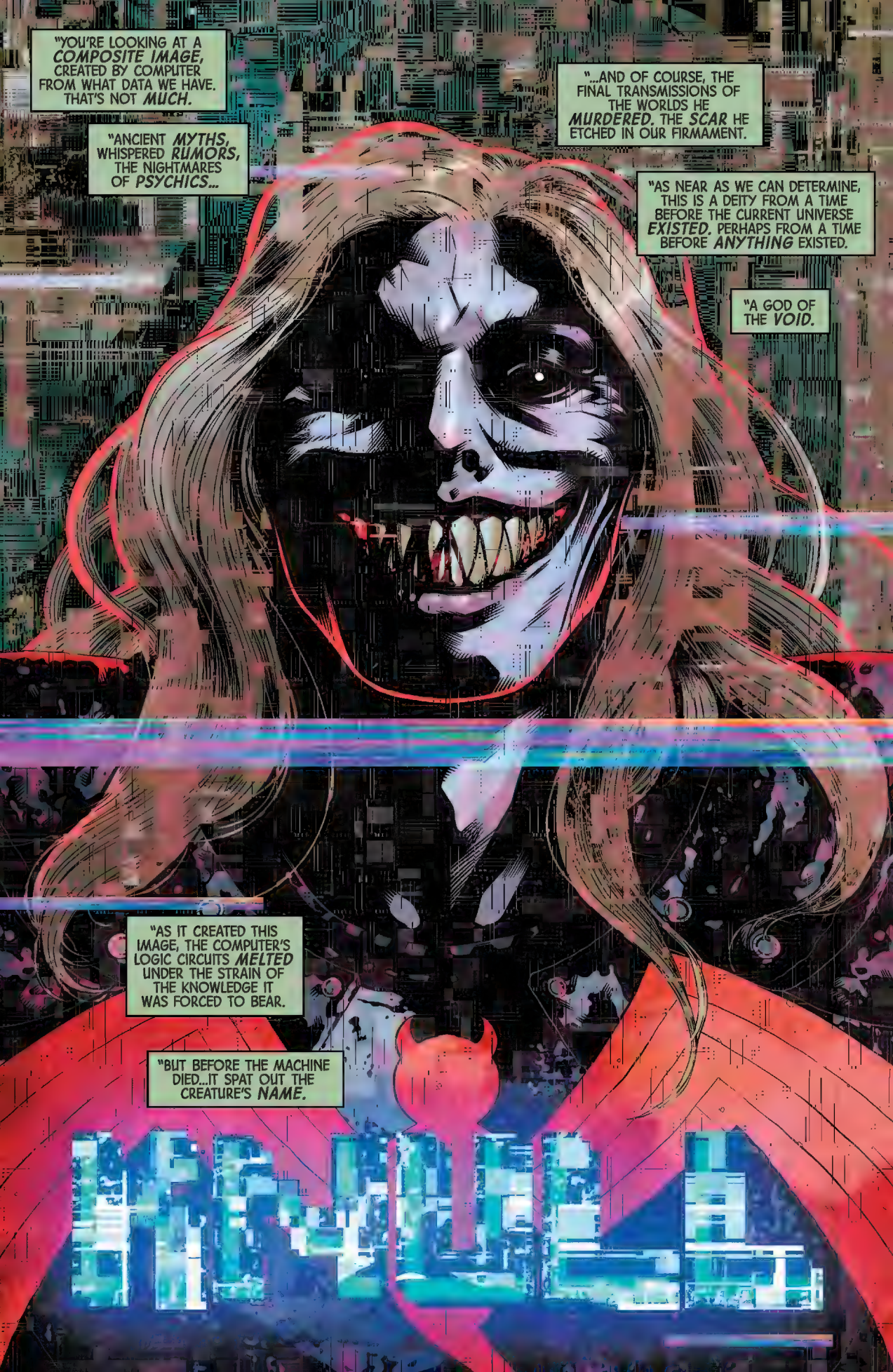
"...I NEED THEM TO KNOW I'LL RISK ANYTHING TO GET THEM HOME."
THIS IS GENERAL Q'LRRKT.
WE HAVE EYES ON THE EVACUEES.
WELCOME HOME, EMPEROR.

TWELVE HOURS LATER.
YOUR MAJESTY.
THE ESCORT FLEET HAS CONFIRMED THAT ALL OF THE EVACUEES HAVE MADE IT HOME SAFELY.
EXCELLENT. THANK YOU.
MAY WE SAY, SIR-- THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP AMONG US WERE INITIALLY UNCONVINCED OF YOUR PLAN TO LEAD AN EVACUATION INSTEAD OF SENDING A FLEET...
...BUT IT SEEMS YOUR CAUTION HAS REAPED REWARDS. THE SHI'AR ARE VERY GRATEFUL THAT THEIR RESORT WASN'T DEADLY. BUT EARTH IS STILL IN PERIL, AND WE MUST CHECK IN WITH OUR ALLIES.
NEVER BEFORE IN THE HISTORY OF THE KREE OR THE SKRULL HAS THE SYNERGY BETWEEN A MONARCH AND HIS COURT WIZARD RESULTED IN SUCH A DISPLAY OF POWER AND SAVING OF LIVES.
YOU HAVE MADE HISTORY THIS DAY, WITH THE STRENGTH OF YOUR UNION.
WELL, WE ARGUE ABOUT LAUNDRY SOMETIMES. WE'RE NOT PERFECT.
VERY GOOD, GENERAL. NOW-- EVERYBODY OUT!
THE EMPEROR AND THE COURT WIZARD HAVE IMPORTANT DUTIES, MY FELLOW WARRIOR-SCHOLARS.
OUT, PLEASE! I MUST INSIST!

LAURI-ELL! WHAT WAS *THAT* ABOUT?
I LISTEN.
DURING OUR MISSION, BOTH OF YOU FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR "ALONE TIME."
I HAVE PROVIDED IT. BUT I WILL INSIST ON THE PRESENCE OF ONE ADDITIONAL PARTY.
LAURI, WE *REALLY* DO NOT NEED SECURITY FOR--
OHMIGOD!
HE CAN STAY!
DO-YOU-NEED-A-DRINK?
I, HOWEVER, SHALL TAKE MY LEAVE.
ENJOY YOUR HONEYMOON, MY LIEGES.
YOU CAN KEEP IT.
YOU'RE THE *BEST*.
BUT JUST IN CASE HE'S A *NOSY* LITTLE ROBOT...
WHOOSH
BRIGHT-BLESSINGS-ON-YOUR-NUPTIALS!

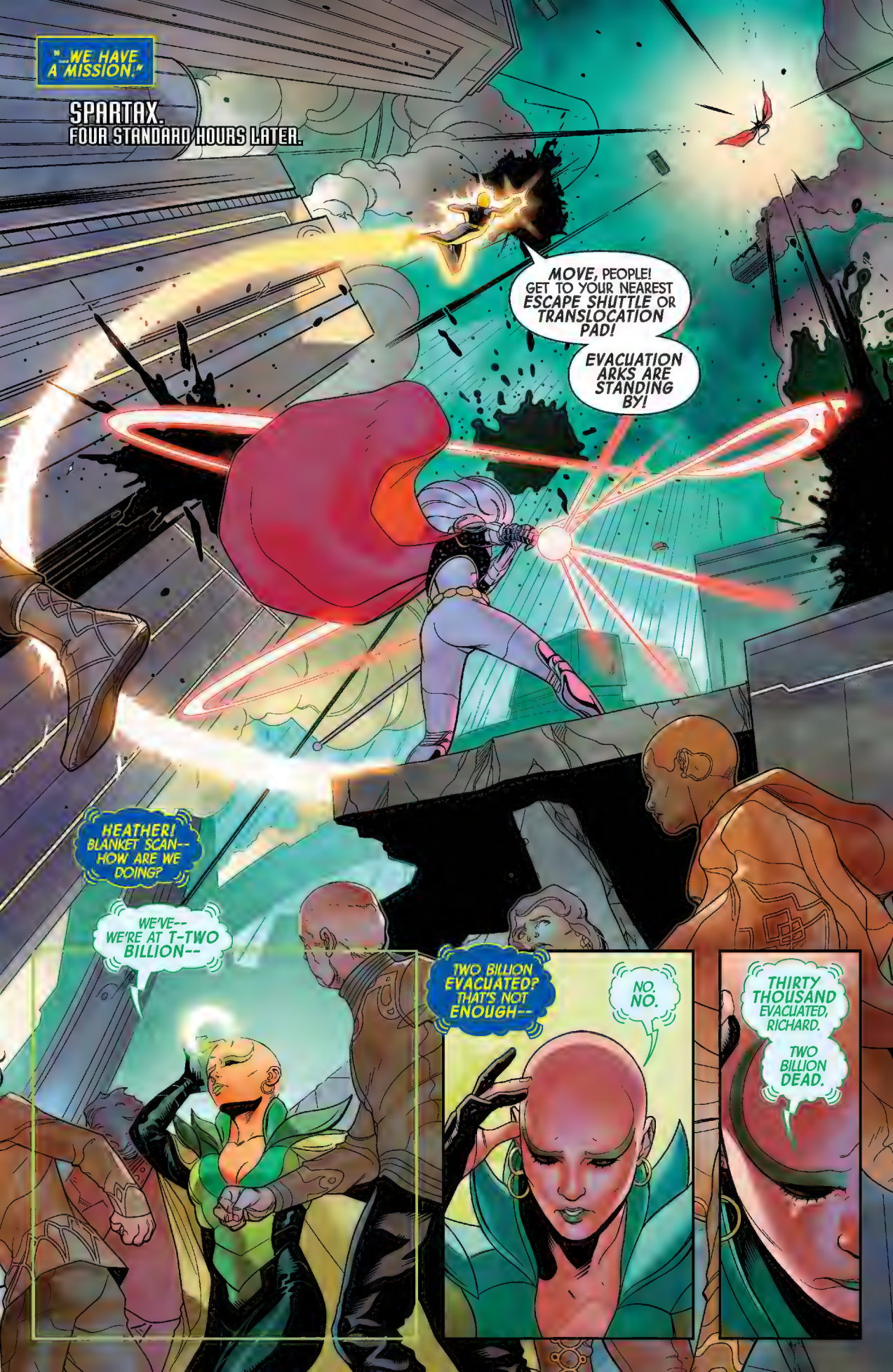
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #10

I THINK I HAD THIS ALBUM


"YOU'RE LOOKING AT A COMPOSITE IMAGE, CREATED BY COMPUTER FROM WHAT DATA WE HAVE. THAT'S NOT MUCH.
"ANCIENT MYTHS, WHISPERED RUMORS, THE NIGHTMARES OF PSYCHICS...
"...AND OF COURSE, THE FINAL TRANSMISSIONS OF THE WORLDS HE MURDERED. THE SCAR HE ETCHED IN OUR FIRMAMENT.
"AS NEAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, THIS IS A DEITY FROM A TIME BEFORE THE CURRENT UNIVERSE EXISTED. PERHAPS FROM A TIME BEFORE ANYTHING EXISTED.
"A GOD OF THE VOID.
"AS IT CREATED THIS IMAGE, THE COMPUTER'S LOGIC CIRCUITS MELTED UNDER THE STRAIN OF THE KNOWLEDGE IT WAS FORCED TO BEAR.
"BUT BEFORE THE MACHINE DIED...IT SPAT OUT THE CREATURE'S NAME.
AZRAEL

THE PROSCENIUM.
HUH.
I THINK I HAD THIS ALBUM.
I UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO ASSERT YOUR PERSONHOOD IN THE FACE OF ABSOLUTE COSMIC HORROR, NOVA--
--BUT TO REITERATE--SILNIUS, MY HOMEWORLD, IS DEAD. EVERYONE I HAVE EVER KNOWN OR LOVED IS DEAD.
I WOULD PREFER IF YOU REFRAINED FROM LEVITY.
MY APOLOGIES, REPRESENTATIVE GUPA. YOU'RE RIGHT--IT'S A WAY OF PROCESSING STRESS.
HERCULES-- YOU KNOW GODS--
NOT THIS ONE. HE'S FROM NO PANTHEON I RECOGNIZE.
A PANTHEON UNTO HIMSELF, PERHAPS...
THIS IDLE SPECULATION SERVES ONLY TO UNSETTLE US. LET'S CONTENT OURSELVES WITH FACTS.
THE KREE/SKRULL ALLIANCE HAS LOST PLANETS OF OUR OWN-- LIKE SILNIUS, THEY SIMPLY CEASED TRANSMISSION.

GNARRAT WENT DARK OVER A WEEK AGO. WE DISPATCHED CAPTAIN AV-ROM AND HIS CREW TO INVESTIGATE--THEY DIDN'T COME BACK.
THE AUGUST GENERAL KALAMARI WENT LOOKING FOR THEM--HE FOUND ONE SURVIVOR, THE WARRIOR TALOS. THEN ALL CONTACT WITH HIM CEASED IN TURN.*
WE FEAR THE WORST...
*AS SEEN IN WEB OF VENOM: EMPYRE'S END! --DS
IS KNULL TARGETING THE KREE/SKRULL ALLIANCE THEN, SUPER-SKRULL?
IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY. WE'RE STARTING TO LOSE CONTACT WITH MULTIPLE COLONY WORLDS AT ONCE--
--AS IF HIS FORCES ARE SPLITTING OFF, TO WREAK AS MUCH HAVOC AS POSSIBLE. KEEP US ALL BUSY WHILE HE GOES AFTER HIS TRUE TARGET.
WHETHER THAT'S THE NEW THRONEWORLD OR THE EARTH OR...
SPARTAX.
ONE OF OUR ASTROLOGICAL SATELLITES SIGHTED A DARK DRAGON AS IT DEVOURED THE COLONY BELOW. NOW THE BEAST IS ON COURSE FOR SPARTAX.
THIS THREATENS MY RULE, RICHARD RIDER--SOMETHING MUST BE DONE--
THERE ARE NINE BILLION PEOPLE LIVING ON SPARTAX, VICTORIA. YEAH, SOMETHING MUST BE DONE.
GUARDIANS...


"...WE HAVE A MISSION."
SPARTAX.
FOUR STANDARD HOURS LATER.
MOVE, PEOPLE! GET TO YOUR NEAREST ESCAPE SHUTTLE OR TRANSLOCATION PAD!
EVACUATION ARKS ARE STANDING BY!
HEATHER! BLANKET SCAN-- HOW ARE WE DOING?
WE'VE-- WE'RE AT T-TWO BILLION--
TWO BILLION EVACUATED? THAT'S NOT ENOUGH--
NO. NO.
THIRTY THOUSAND EVACUATED, RICHARD.
TWO BILLION DEAD.

AND MORE. AND MORE.
SOLID EVIL, RAINING FROM THE SKIES, KILLING PEOPLE, AND I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS OR HOW TO STOP IT--
HEATHER?
HEATHER, YOU'RE...YOU'RE CRYING.
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU CRY BEFORE.
NEVER?
WHY NOT?
WE GOT CASUALTIES!
BIG BLACK GLOB OF STUFF CAME OUT OF THE SKY--MISSED ME, BUT IT HIT A SHUTTLE WHILE IT WAS LOADING UP.
IT'S-- IT'S NOT GOOD, GUYS.
HOW NOT GOOD ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

MOMENTS LATER.
GOD IN HEAVEN.
WHAT... DOES THIS...?
I MEAN, WE'VE SEEN IT. THE BIG DRAGON UP THERE KEEPS SHEDDING THESE GLOBS OF BLACK GOOP. THEY HIT LIKE METEORS-- BOOM, THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE.
WHAT THEY'RE MADE OF THOUGH--I GOT NO CLUE.
REMINDS ME OF A KLYNTAR SYMBIOTE, KINDA. LIKE THE ONE THAT THOMPSON KID BONDED WITH, Y'KNOW?
ONLY I NEVER SAW ONE LIKE THIS.
C'MON, WE GOTTA LOOK FOR SURVIVORS--
AAAAHH! GOD!
WHAT--?
SNF
PETE...?

HOLY FLARK.
IS THAT YOU?
YOU...?
IS THIS HELL?
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
OH, CRAP.
YOU, UH...
YOU SHOULD LOOK BEHIND YOU.
WHY?
IT IS TOO LATE FOR THAT.

DO YOU RE MEM BER ?

THE *WEAPON* IS INVINCIBLE. THE ONE WEAKNESS IN WORKING YOUR WILL IS *YOU.*

BUT I HAVE MADE YOU A *STAR-LORD.*

YOU ARE *MASTER OF YOUR MIND.*

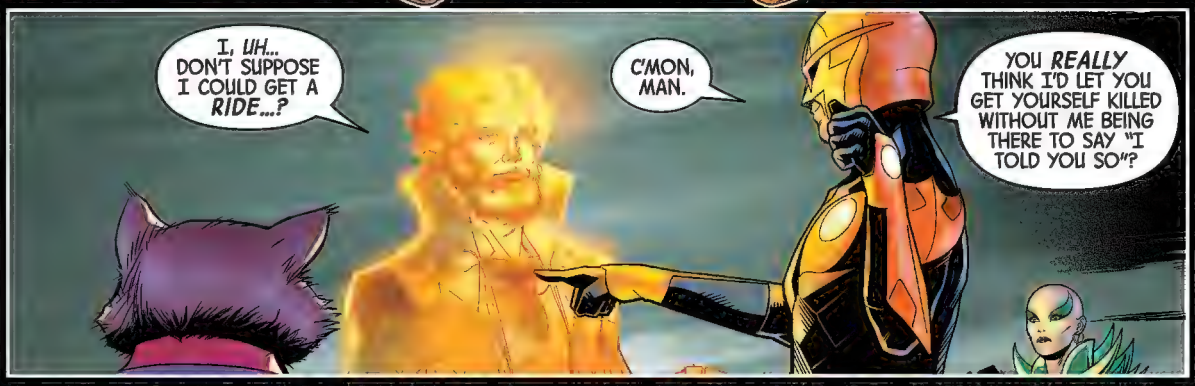
THE *MIND*...THE *COSMOS*...

THE *UNIVERSAL RADIANT ENERGY!*

FOUR ELEMENTS UNDER YOUR CONTROL, STAR-LORD. THE FOUR ELEMENTS... EVERYTHING...
...BUT A CONCEPT IN YOUR MIND'S SILVER EYE.
YEAH...
FLARK-- I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
YOU'RE ALIVE!
ALIVE AND SHOOTING DRAGONS IN THE FACE! BLAM! DRAGON-SLEW YOU!
WHAT ARE YOU WEARING...?
YOU'RE REAL.
PETE, THIS--THIS IS INSANE--
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD, AND YOU JUST--
WHAT WAS THAT? SINCE WHEN DID THE ELEMENT GUN PACK THAT KIND OF PUNCH?
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...?
RICH. RICH RIDER. YOU'RE REAL.
I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD. I THOUGHT YOU MUST HAVE DIED A CENTURY AGO.
I MOURNED YOU...BUT...
...BUT TIME IS DIFFERENT THERE...MUST BE...
OH GOD, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN THERE... WHILE I'VE BEEN HERE...?
HOO BOY. I DON'T THINK ALL OF HIM CAME BACK.
PETE... WHERE'S "THERE"?
BY THE ALL--

QUILL? YOU'RE ALIVE?
I'M GLAD SOMEONE IS. BUT WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR REUNIONS NOW.
I HEARD THE DRAGON'S SCREAM IN MY MIND.
IT'S CONNECTED TO KNULL--A VESSEL FOR HIS HATE, AND NOW IT HAS A PERSONAL HATE FOR US.
IT HAS NO THOUGHTS. BUT ITS EMOTIONS ARE ALMOST DEAFENING--A CACOPHONY OF CRUELTY AND DARKNESS.
IT WAS PLAYING WITH ITS FOOD, SAVORING THE FEAR...BUT NOW PLAYTIME IS OVER...
...SO I HOPE THAT BLAST WASN'T ALL YOU HAD UP YOUR NEW SLEEVES, PETER.
HAZEL...? HEATHER MOONDRAGON.
I REMEMBER YOU. YOU READ MINDS.
YOU CAN READ ITS THOUGHTS?
I'VE OPENED THE SILVER EYE OF MY MIND, MOONDRAGON. SO...NO.
NO, IT WAS NOT.

I SPENT OVER A CENTURY IN MORINUS--THE LAND BEYOND ALL SUNS. I LEARNED THINGS THERE.
THE HOUSES OF MAN AND THE ELEMENTS THAT BIND THEM. THE HIDDEN ORBIT OF THE SELF.
THE ELEMENT GUN IS NOT JUST A GUN. NOT JUST A THING THAT DESTROYS.
IT'S A PRISM. AN OBJECT OF FOCUS. I CAN FOCUS MYSELF THROUGH IT.
LIKE THE SUN.
FLARK ON TOAST.
DID YOU TURN YOURSELF INTO A GOD WHILE WE WEREN'T LOOKIN', PETE?
NAH. A GOD WOULD HAVE THOUGHT TO BRING A FLIGHT PACK ALONG.


I, UH... DON'T SUPPOSE I COULD GET A RIDE...?
C'MON, MAN.
YOU REALLY THINK I'D LET YOU GET YOURSELF KILLED WITHOUT ME BEING THERE TO SAY "I TOLD YOU SO"?

NEVER CROSSED MY MIND.

ALL RIGHT. ONE HUMAN ROCKET, AT YOUR SERVICE.
LIKE OLD TIMES.
IT IS? DID WE EVER DO THIS?
I DON'T REMEMBER.
I STILL FEEL LIKE I'M DREAMING.
YEAH. GUESS I'LL STAY HERE...
MAYBE LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC...
THIS THOUGH. THIS I REMEMBER.
PHYLA--- MOONDRAGON--- YOU GO AROUND IT! FLANK IT, EITHER SIDE!
RICH--
--WE'RE GOING IN!

IN.
YES.
COME IN.
FREELY AND OF YOUR OWN WILL...
...INTO THE DARK.
NO MERE ABSENCE OF LIGHT. MY DARK IS ALIVE.
IT BREATHES AND SHIFTS... SHINES AND GLISTENS...
IT OBEYS.
YOU ARE IN THE VOID. HERE, I AM MASTER.
KNEEL BEFORE MY BLACK AND OOZING THRONE. AND I WILL SHOW YOU.
I WILL SHOW YOU THE MOST INTIMATE DEPTHS OF SUFFERING.
IF YOU BUT KNEEL.
AND LET ME CONSUME YOU.

OKAY. NONE OF THAT IS GOOD.
JUST GET ME CLOSE TO HIM, RICH--
AAHH!
RICH!
HE'S SNARED US--
I NEED A DISTRACTION HERE--
WE'RE TRYING--IT KEEPS GROWING BACK--
BECAUSE IT IS I.
ALL HERE IS I.
ALL GROWS TO THE SHAPE I DESIRE.
AS WILL YOU.
I AM MASTER HERE. KNEEL TO ME.
WHEN I AM DONE... THERE WILL BE NO YOU.
ONLY THE DARK.
YOU SEE NOW?
YOU SEE HOW MY DARK SHINES?

COLD.
DARK.
YES.
NOW YOU SEE.
HEATHER! RE-OPEN TELEPATHIC LINK!
YOU WILL FIGHT IT ALONE.
IT'S UP TO ME--
YOU WILL LOSE EVERYTHING.
I WILL BE THE DARK IN YOUR OWN SOUL.
THE DRAGON IN YOUR BROKEN HEART.
AND I WILL TEAR THE SUN FROM YOUR SKY.
TEAR CERTAINTIES AWAY AND LEAVE YOU HOPELESS.
AND I WILL BE YOUR EVERY NIGHTMARE.
EVERYTHING YOU COULD NOT SAVE OR COULD NOT ESCAPE.
AND I WILL BE YOUR--
"MASTER."

I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME.
AND I WAS WONDERING WHY I WAS SENT TO THIS PLACE, TO THIS TIME. BUT IT'S OBVIOUS NOW.
THIS IS THE PLANET OF MY FATHERS, RULED BY MY SISTER. MY FRIENDS ARE FIGHTING TO SAVE IT. THIS IS WHERE I NEED TO BE.
YOU SAY YOU'RE MASTER OF THE DARK? THE VOID?
I'M THE MASTER OF THE SUN.
AND YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY.
SUN'S OUT...
...GUN'S OUT.
KZZAAMM

DAMN.
WHAT... WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME, PETE...?
...A STAR-LORD.
THE SYMBIOTE RESIDUE IS INERT. SPARTAX IS SAVED.
WE CAN TAKE THIS FIGHT TO THE TRUE KNULL, IF WE CAN FIND HIM--
HE'S ON EARTH.
THAT NEW S.W.O.R.D. STATION'S SPREADING THE WORD--HE'S GOT THE WHOLE PLANET SEALED OFF.
I SAY WE GO HELP OUT--
NO. NOT YET.
IF EARTH'S IN DANGER--WE CAN'T GO NEAR IT RIGHT NOW. WE'D ONLY MAKE EVERYTHING WORSE.
WHAT?
WHEREVER I AM--THAT'S WHERE THEY'LL BE. SOON.
AS LONG AS I'VE GOT HALF THEIR POWER, THEY'LL WANT IT BACK. I NEED TO GO WHERE THERE'S NO LIFE...NOBODY THEY CAN HURT...
...WHO'S "THEY," PETE?
WHO DID YOU PISS OFF THIS TIME?
THINK ABOUT IT. WHO WENT INTO THE BLACK HOLE WITH ME, RICH?

"THE GODS OF OLYMPUS.
"THEY'RE COMING BACK...
"...AND THEY'RE COMING FOR ME."

KING IN BLACK: WICCAN AND HUCKLING VARIANT BY
RUSSELL DAUTERMAN

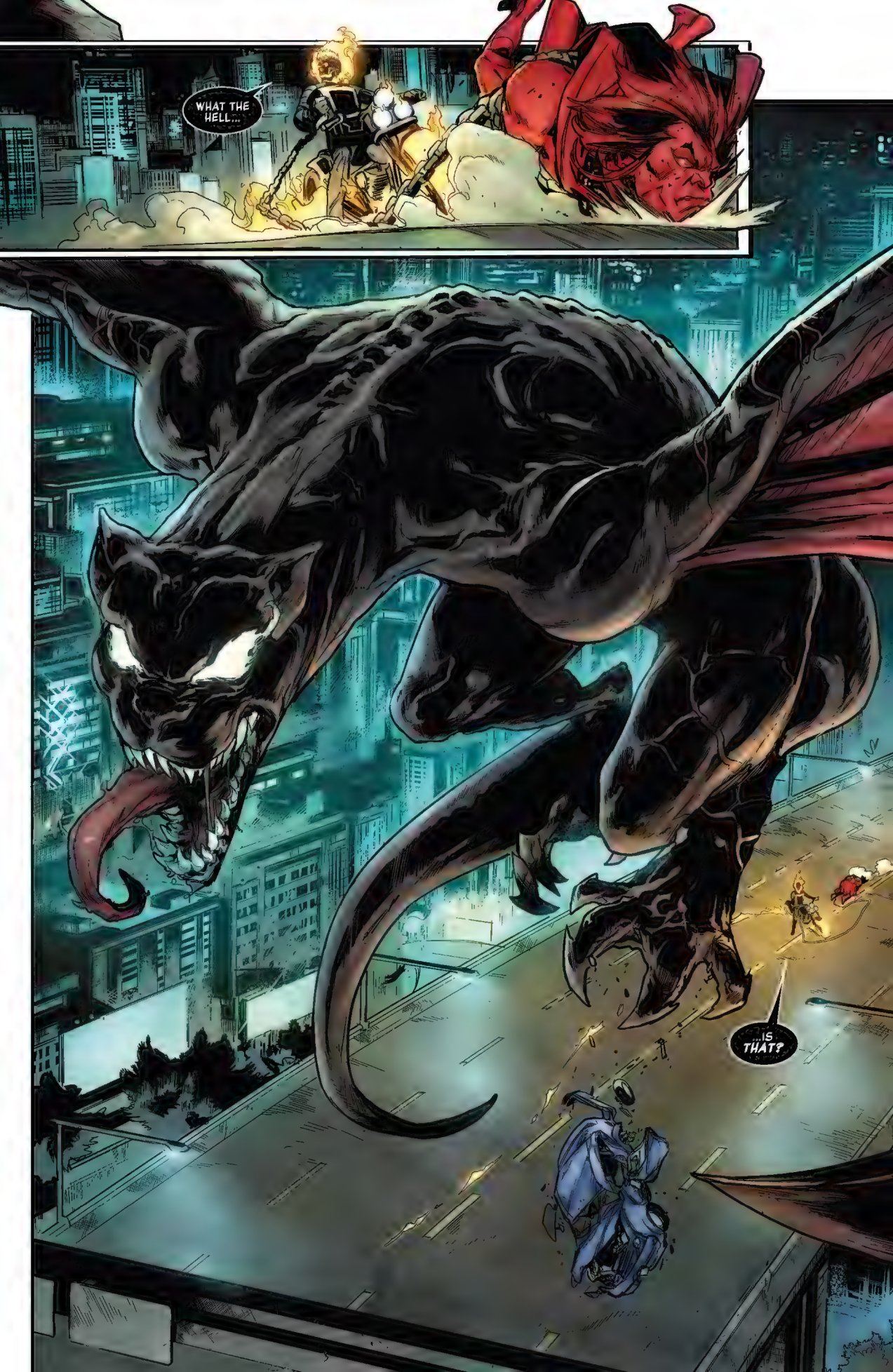
KING IN BLACK: WICCAN AND HUCKLING
STORMBREAKER VARIANT BY
PEACH MOMOKO

KING IN BLACK: GHOST RIDER VARIANT BY
GERALD PAREL

KING IN BLACK: GHOST RIDER
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH VARIANT BY
JEN BARTEL

KING IN BLACK: GHOST RIDER

HELL HAS BROKEN LOOSE.
LITERALLY.
MY OWN ARROGANCE LED ME TO BELIEVE THAT RUNNING HELL WOULD BE...
...WELL, NOT EASY, NO.
THIS... UNFF... IS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE...
BUT, NAIVELY, I THOUGHT I COULD MAKE A CHANGE.
I REALIZE HOW STUPID IT SOUNDS, WHAT WAS I GOING TO DO, INTRODUCE A REHABILITATION PROGRAM IN HELL?
INSTEAD, HELL ROSE UP AGAINST ME IN REBELLION.
AND NOW LILITH IS OUT IN THE WILD, PLOTTING TO SEIZE CONTROL OF HELL FROM ME...
...WHILE HUNDREDS OF ESCAPED DEMONS RUN AMOK ON EARTH.
KEEP TALKING-- I CAN ALWAYS MAKE IT MUCH LESS COMFORTABLE, MEPHIST--
--OOOOOOOO!
WOOOOSH


WHAT THE HELL...
...IS THAT?

THAT LOOKS BAD.
SHUT UP.
A SWARM OF DRAGONS HEADED TO NEW YORK.
EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE... SOME OF THEM INNOCENT EVEN...
...MAYBE...
...RIGHT IN THE CROSS-HAIRS OF THOSE BLACK, OILY CREATURES.
THOUGH I'M SURE THOSE PEOPLE WILL BE FINE. MAYBE THEY'RE FRIENDLY DRAGONS?
BESIDES, IT'S NOT YOUR PROBLEM ANYMORE, RIGHT? YOUR CONCERNS ARE HEAVEN AND HELL. THE MORTAL PLANE IS BEST LEFT TO...MORTALS.
IT'S BENEATH YOUR STATION.
I SAID...
...SHUT UP!

VRRRRMMMMMM
MEPHISTO TAUNTS, BUT HE KNOWS--JUST AS I DO--
--I CAN'T TURN MY BACK ON THIS.
THERE IS NO SENSE IN STOPPING LILITH IF IT MEANS SACRIFICING THOUSANDS--MILLIONS--OF LIVES TO DO SO.
SKREEEEEE
THE DEMONS WILL HAVE TO WAIT.

OKAY, OKAY...
...NOW WHAT?!
KASMASH

SMASH
YOU MANIACS! YOU NEARLY HIT MY--
SHUUUK
DON'T WORRY, MY FLESHY FRIEND.
WE WILL DEAL WITH THOSE "MANIACS."
HE IS HERE! THE FALSE KING AND MEPHISTO!
THEY HAVE TAKEN TO THE SKIES.
BRING THEM DOWN!
KILL THE FALSE KING!

JOHNATHON!
BUSY TRYING TO KILL A DRAGON RIGHT NOW, MEPHISTO.
WELL, YOU BETTER FIGURE IT OUT QUICK, DRAGON SLAYER.
BECAUSE YOU HAVE A LOT OF EAGER CUSTOMERS HEADED YOUR WAY.
UGH. THE FEEL OF IT.
DON'T KNOW HOW VENOM IS INVOLVED IN ALL THIS. BUT YOU NEVER FORGET THE SLICK, SLITHERING FEEL OF A SYMBIOTE.
I PRAY THAT MY HELLFIRE CAN PROVIDE ENOUGH DISTRACTION...
...WHILE I...
FWOOOOOM
...GAMBLE EVERYTHING ON A HAIL MARY.

NOT SURE THIS THING HAS MUCH OF A SOUL.
NO IDEA IF THE DAMNATION STARE IS GOING TO DO SQUAT.
BUT MAYBE I GET LUCKY AND IT SENDS THIS BASTARD RIGHT TO HELL LIKE IT DOES TO THOSE DAMNED RUNAWAY DEMONS.
STARE INTO MY EYES.
FEEL THE SOUL-SCORCHING WRATH OF MY DAMNATION STARE.
FEEL THE PAIN OF EVERY WRONG YOU HAVE EVER--
OOOF.
SKRAAAAAAAWWW!
FORGOT HOW MUCH USING THE STARE ON A SYMBIOTE TAKES OUT OF ME. HURTS ME ALMOST AS MUCH AS IT HURTS THEM.
NEED A SECOND TO RECOUP.
DAMNATION STARE BROKE OFF WHATEVER SORT OF CONNECTION THIS DRAGON HAD TO THE OTHERS. THAT'S SOMETHING, AT LEAST.
BOUGHT MYSELF A FEW MINUTES, MAYBE.
A FEW MINUTES TO FIGURE OUT HOW THE HELL...
...TO KILL A SYMBIOTE-INFECTED DRAGON.
SHUUUUK
WHAT...?

SKRRRAAAAAAAAAW!
HEY BROTHER.
LOOKS LIKE YOU COULD USE A HAND

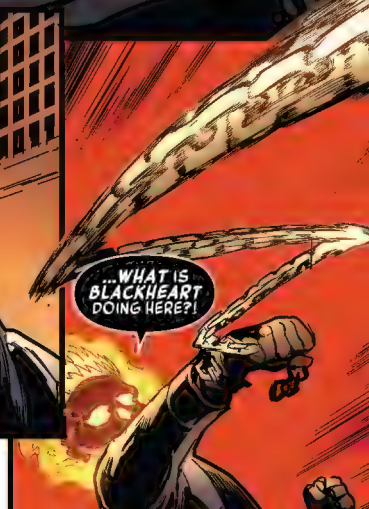
DANNY?
CALL ME DEATH RIDER.
DEATH RIDER? ARE YOU SERIOUS?

I DIDN'T WANT TO USE THE LAST GUY'S NAME. I MEAN, "NECROSIS"?* COME ON
BESIDES, DEATH RIDER FEELS MORE ON BRAND. RIGHT? GHOST RIDER. DEATH RIDER...
OKAY, OKAY. DEATH RIDER IT IS.
YOU'RE DAMN RIGHT.
*SEE GHOST RIDER (2019) #4! --ED

THOUGHT THAT WAS A DRAGON INFECTED BY A SYMBIOTE.
BUT LOOK AT THIS.

IT WAS A SYMBIOTE IN THE FORM OF A DRAGON.
IT TRIED TO INFECT ME BUT COULDN'T. I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S BECAUSE OF MY CONNECTION TO HELL OR BECAUSE OF THE DAMNATION STARE.
EITHER WAY, DON'T GET NEAR IT.

YOUR BLIGHT BLADE ONLY STUNNED THE SYMBIOTE. ALREADY, IT'S PULLING BACK TOGETHER.
THEN WE NEED TO FIND A WAY TO KILL IT...
...BECAUSE THAT WAS ONLY ONE OF ABOUT A THOUSAND SWARMING THE CITY.
WAIT...


...WHAT IS BLACKHEART DOING HERE?!

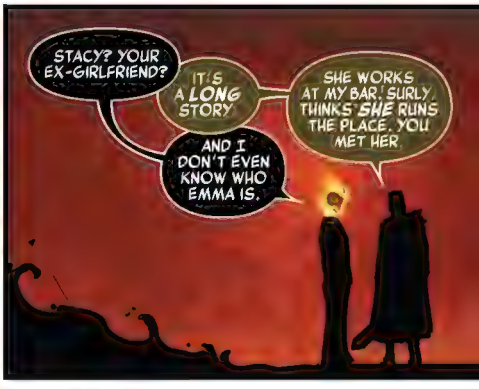
PLEASE. DO YOU THINK YOUR CHAINS CAN HOLD ME?
ARE YOU COMING TO TRY TO SNATCH MY CROWN TOO?
I'M HERE TO END THIS RIDICULOUS WAR.
TO STOP YOU BEFORE ANY MORE DIE.
JOHNNY. LET HIM GO.
AND YOU!
YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO BE CHUMMING IT UP WITH BLACKHEART.
SAYS THE MANIAC RIDING AROUND WITH MEPHISTO.
JUST...
...SHUT UP FOR A MINUTE AND LET US EXPLAIN.

THAT WENT WELL.
GHOST RIDERS HAVE NEVER BEEN KNOWN FOR THEIR EVEN TEMPERAMENT, CARETAKER.
I'M WELL AWARE.

YOU KNOW, FOR SOMEONE WHO TOLD ME THAT THEY DIDN'T WANT TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS WAR--
I KNOW. I KNOW. BUT PLEASE JUST LISTEN.
BLACKHEART'S HERE BECAUSE HE WANTS TO KEEP LILITH FROM TAKING THE THRONE OF HELL.
SURE HE DOES.

WANTS TO KEEP HER FROM IT SO THAT HE CAN CLAIM IT FOR HIMSELF.
THAT MAY BE, BUT THAT'S A BRIDGE WE'LL CROSS WHEN THE TIME COMES.

FOR NOW... HE HAS STACY AND EMMA. HE'S INFECTED THEIR SOULS. AND HE WON'T RELEASE THEM UNLESS WE HELP HIM END THIS WAR.
THEY'RE NOT PART OF THIS. THEY DON'T DESERVE TO DIE BECAUSE OF WHAT OUR LIVES HAVE BECOME.


STACY? YOUR EX-GIRLFRIEND?
IT'S A LONG STORY.
AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO EMMA IS.
SHE WORKS AT MY BAR, SURLY. THINKS SHE RUNS THE PLACE. YOU MET HER.

RIGHT. THE CHARMER.
AND HOW DOES BLACKHEART PROPOSE WE END THIS WAR?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT.
COLOR ME SURPRISED.

IT INVOLVES MEPHISTO--
MEPHISTO?! DAMMIT!
I TURN AROUND FOR ONE SECOND AND...
#HUFF# #HUFF#
THAT'S RIGHT, KEEP BABBLING ON, YOU MORONS.
JUST NEED A FEW MORE MOMENTS TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, THEN I'M ON THE FIRST PLANE TO FLORIDA FOR SUN AND FUN AND--
MOVE IT, FOOL!
MY KING!
PLEASE... WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.
WE ARE HERE TO...
...TO...
...GUUUUK...

...EAAAAT YOURRR SPIIIIINE!

BACK.
THE DEVIL IS OURS.

WE NEED TO GET MEPHISTO AWAY FROM THE SYMBIOTE.

IF WE CAN'T KILL THE SYMBIOTE, WE NEED TO KEEP STUNNING IT. BUY OURSELVES SOME TIME TO FIGURE OUT A MORE PERMANENT SOLUTION.

WE WON'T SUCCEED BY STANDING HERE AND OGLING THE THREAT.
YOU KEEP THEM OCCUPIED. I WILL TEND TO MY FATHER.

JOHNNY... THIS SYMBIOTE... ALL THESE DEMONS...
...THEY'RE ALL INFECTED BY ONE ORGANISM. IF YOU USE YOUR DAMNATION STARE ON ONE, THEN THE REST SHOULD FALL TOO.
SURE, BUT IT WON'T BUY US MUCH TIME, AND I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN DO IT MORE THAN ONCE MORE.
LAST TIME, FELT LIKE MY HEAD WAS GOING TO EXPLODE.
WE JUST NEED A LITTLE ROOM TO BREATHE.
BLAM
HURRY.
LOOK INTO MY EYES.
FEEL THE--
NO!

WE WON'T LET YOU HURT US AGAIN.
UNFFF.
IT'S OUR TURN...
GOING TO SLURP THE SWEET MARROW FROM YOUR--
GUUUUUK.
THAT'S TWICE I'VE PULLED YOUR FAT FROM THE FIRE.
IN CASE YOU WERE COUNTING.
IT'S REAL GREAT THAT YOU TOOK DOWN ONE DEMON.
GET TO WORK ON THE OTHER THOUSAND!
BLAM

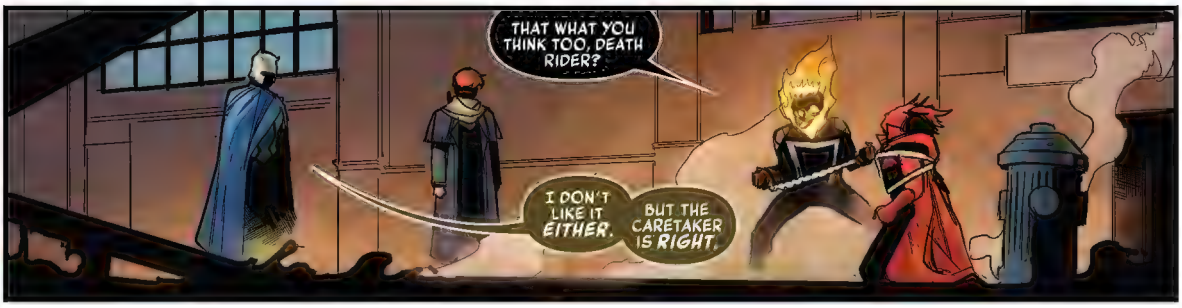
WATCH MY BACK--GIVE ME THE SPACE I NEED TO WORK.
THAT'S WHAT BROTHERS ARE FOR.
NGFFF. JOHNNY!
NO.
LOOK INTO MY EYES.
DON'T!
FEEL THE PAIN THAT YOU HAVE INFLICTED UPON OTHERS.
I BEG OF YOU!
FEEL THE SEARING SUFFERING AND UNYIELDING WRATH OF THE...
...DAMNATION STARE!
IT WORKED.

ENOUGH OF THIS.
WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE HERE? DO YOU WORK FOR LILITH?
AAAGGGH!
ANSWER ME!
PLEASE... PLEASE, MY LORD.
I AM BUT A HUMBLE SERVANT OF MEPHISTO.
I DO NOT STAND WITH LILITH.
SMART LITTLE DEMON.
TELL ME THAT YOU DID NOT COME HERE WITHOUT A PLAN.
YES...
...WE HAVE A PLAN.

THIS WAR ENDS HERE.
SHIIK
YOUR SACRIFICE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN, LITTLE ONE.
IT IS MY PLEASURE TO FORFEIT MY BEING IN SERVICE OF MY TRUE LORD.
AAAAAAARGGGGGH!
GRAAAAAAAAAAAAH!
AH, THE PORTAL OF 1,000 CONDEMNED SOULS..
VERY CLEVER

MY SON. I KNEW YOU WOULD NOT FORSAKE ME.
IF I HAD A HEART, IT WOULD BE BURSTING WITH JOY.
I'VE ENJOYED MY LITTLE VACATION. BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY.
THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE--
--HOOOOOOOOOOOME.
SWIFFFF

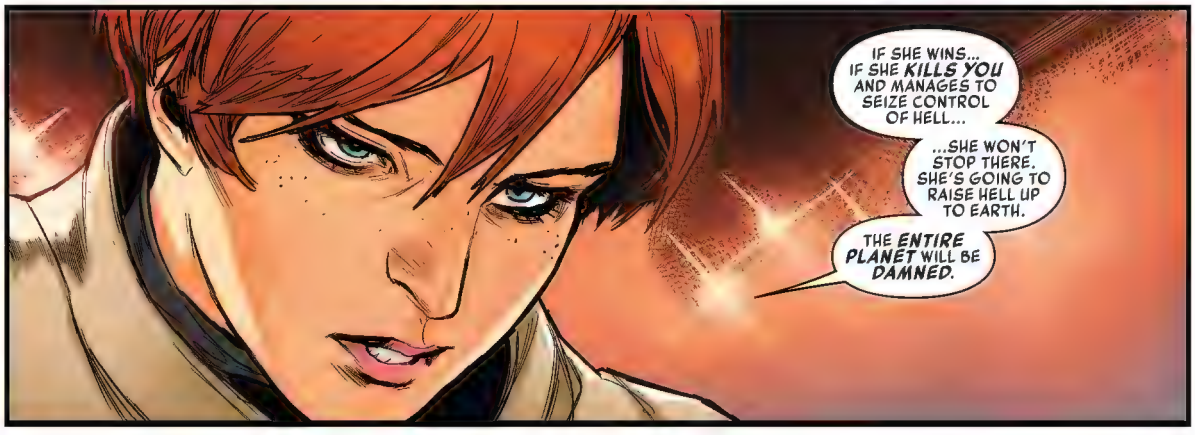
DISTRACTING ME, MAKING A RUN.
IT'S GETTING OLD.
OOOF.
SO IS BEING CHAINED AND DRAGGED AROUND BY THE USURPER OF MY THRONE.
DO YOU HEAR ME COMPLAINING?
ALL.
THE.
TIME.
JOHNNY...
I'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL, CARETAKER.
YOU HAVE TO LET MEPHISTO GO.
MEPHISTO IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN LEAD ME TO LILITH'S ARMY OF DEMONS.
WITHOUT HIM, I'M NOT SURE I CAN DO THIS.
EVEN WITH HIM, YOU CAN'T.


THAT WHAT YOU THINK TOO, DEATH RIDER?
I DON'T LIKE IT EITHER.
BUT THE CARETAKER IS RIGHT.

MEPHISTO'S BEEN DEALING WITH LILITH'S ATTEMPTS TO TAKE OVER HELL FOR MILLENNIA.
YOU'VE BEEN IN HELL FOR MONTHS AND...
LOOK, THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU WANT TO HEAR, I KNOW...

BUT IF YOU LET MEPHISTO GO, LET HIM RECLAIM THE THRONE...
...YOU CAN END THIS NOW.
OH, I LIKE HER. SHE'S A SMART ONE. YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY LISTEN TO HER.
SHUT UP.

MEPHISTO...WE KNOW HOW HE OPERATES. WE'VE BATTLED HIM BEFORE. WE'LL BATTLE HIM AGAIN.
LILITH, HOWEVER...


IF SHE WINS... IF SHE KILLS YOU AND MANAGES TO SEIZE CONTROL OF HELL...
...SHE WON'T STOP THERE. SHE'S GOING TO RAISE HELL UP TO EARTH.
THE ENTIRE PLANET WILL BE DAMNED.

AFTER ALL I DID...
...FIGHTING TO TAKE HELL, TO CONTROL IT, TO REIN IT IN...
...YOU WANT ME TO JUST GIVE UP?
MEPHISTO IS BEHIND EVERY NASTY THING THAT I'VE EVER HAD TO ENDURE.
IT'S BECAUSE OF HIM THAT I'VE BEEN CURSED TO THIS LIFE.
IT'S BECAUSE OF HIM THAT MY FAMILY IS DEAD.
AND HOW MANY OTHERS HAS HE DAMNED? HOW MANY LIVES HAS HE RUINED?
WHEN YOU FIRST CAME TO ME AND ASKED ME FOR HELP, I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE FOR YOU SO THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO GO THIS ALONE.
FOR THAT, I AM SORRY, JOHNNY.
TRULY, TRULY SORRY.
BUT GHOST RIDER IS NEEDED HERE.
YOU CAN CONTINUE TRYING TO SAVE THE SOULS OF EVERYONE IN THE WORLD--
--BUT IF WE DON'T STOP THIS THREAT, THERE WON'T BE A SOUL LEFT TO SAVE.
SEND MEPHISTO BACK TO HELL WHERE HE BELONGS. LET HIM SET HIS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER.
YOU'RE ASKING ME TO TAKE A PRETTY BIG LEAP OF FAITH IN THE SELF-PROCLAIMED PRINCE OF LIES.
I KNOW.
YOU HAVE MY WORD.
IF HE RENEGES ON HIS PROMISE...

"...I'LL GO DOWN TO HELL AND KILL HIM MYSELF."
PARTING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW.
I WILL MISS OUR TIME TOGETHER, JOHNNY.
AS ONE FINAL GIFT, ALLOW ME TO LEND A HAND...
...AND LESSEN YOUR BURDEN.
I'LL DISPOSE OF THIS SYMBIOTE IN THE CAULDRON OF THE INFINITE COSMIC FLAME.
A GIFT FROM DORMAMMU THAT HAS BEEN COLLECTING DUST SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME. IT WILL BE GOOD TO FINALLY PUT IT TO SOME USE.
TA-TA!

I HATE EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS.
CHOOSING THE DEVIL YOU KNOW OVER THE DEVIL YOU DON'T...
...IS STILL CHOOSING A DEVIL.
POOF
I KNOW.
I KNOW THAT THIS ISN'T THE ENDING YOU WANTED.
IT'S MESSY, AND WE ALL HOPED IT COULD GO A DIFFERENT WAY.
BUT SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO TAKE WHAT YOU CAN GET.
THE IMPORTANT THING IS...

WE NEVER STOP FIGHTING

EPILOGUE. PART 1.
THE FADEAWAY.
BROOKLYN, NY.
FADEAWAY
FADEAWAY

WHA...WHAT... HAPPENED?
WE MUST'VE GONE HARD LAST NIGHT, STACY. I DON'T REMEMBER A THING.
I JUST WANT TO LIE HERE AND STARE AT THE CEILING AND NOT MOVE AND NOT BREATHE AND...
NOPE... PRETTY SURE I'M GONNA THROW UP.

I NEED TO GO HOME.
WAIT...WAS THERE, LIKE...SOME SORT OF DEMON-DUDE? LIKE EIGHT FEET TALL, RED GLOWING EYES AND SMELLED LIKE ROTTEN EGGS? OR WAS I JUST THAT DRUNK?
NO, YOU WEREN'T. I REMEMBER THAT TOO.
DAMN. THAT'S WEIRD, RIGHT? LIKE...

WORD OF ADVICE, EMMA.
YOU HANG AROUND DANNY TOO MUCH, THIS IS THE KIND OF THING YOU INVITE INTO YOUR LIFE.
THERE ARE A MILLION OTHER BARS IN NEW YORK. PLENTY OF JOBS FOR SOMEONE LIKE YOU.
YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER IT.
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

...I NEED TO CHECK ON MY FAMILY.

EPILOGUE. PART 2. HELL.
WELCOME HOME, MY LORD.
ALL HAIL MEPHISTO, THE ONE TRUE KING.
THIS IS QUITE THE WELCOME, BLACKHEART.
YOUR ABSENCE WAS LIKE A VOID, FATHER.
YOUR RETURN IS CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION.
YES, I DO LOVE A GOOD PARTY.
NEED TO SHAKE THE STINK OF EARTH AND HUMANS OFF OF ME.
AND THE SYMBIOTE?
SHOULD I BRING IT TO THE CAULDRON OF THE INFINITE COSMIC FLAME?
HA!
DON'T BE SO NAIVE.
THERE IS NO SUCH CAULDRON.
NO?
IT'S JUST A MASHING OF WORDS.
I WANTED OUT OF THERE AND THOUGHT THAT HAVING A SYMBIOTE OF OUR OWN MIGHT MAKE FOR SOME RAINY-DAY FUN IN THE FUTURE.
NOW BE A DEAR AND STORE THAT SYMBIOTE SOMEWHERE SECURE UNTIL THAT RAINY DAY.

AH...
...IT'S GOOD TO BE HOME.

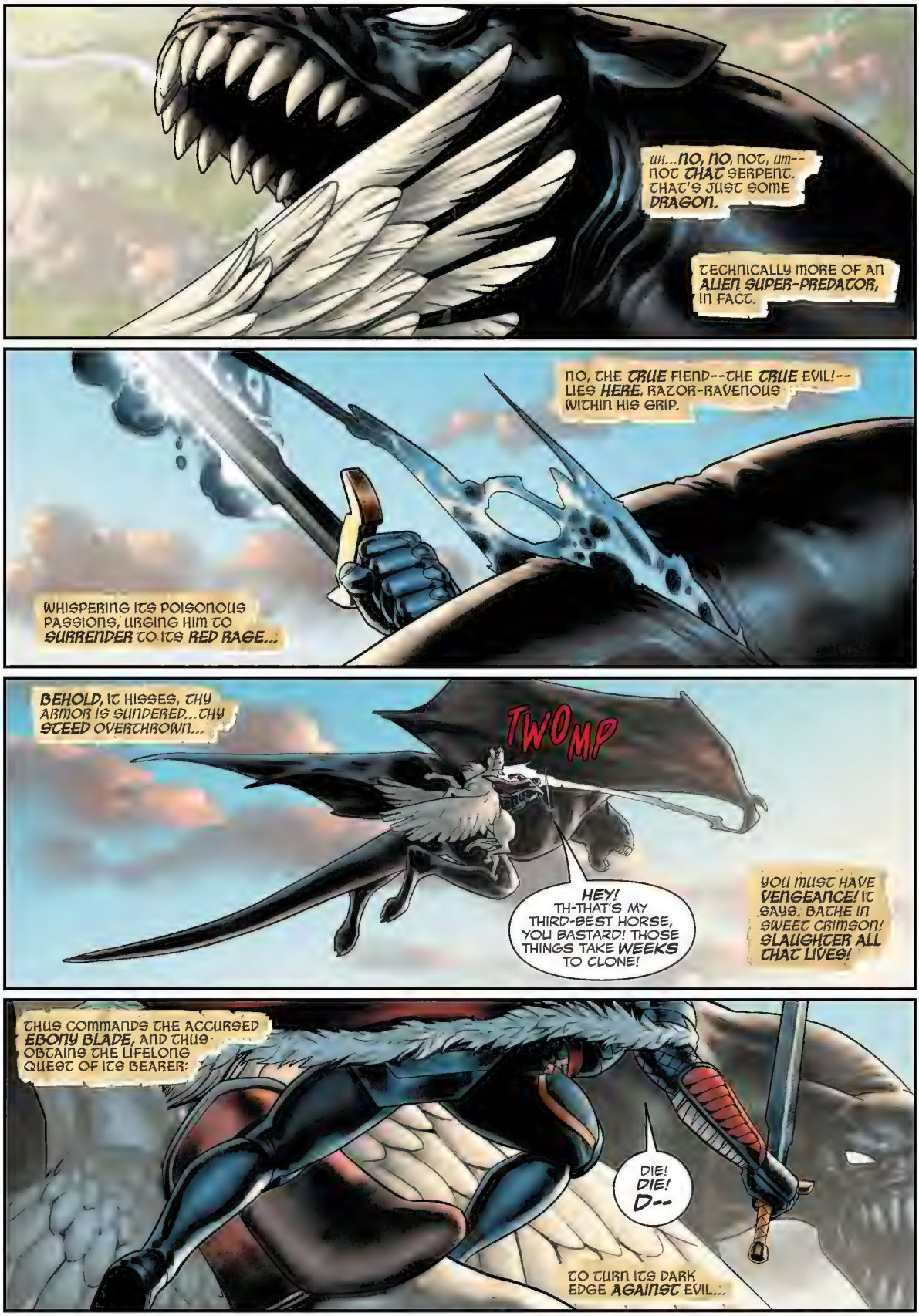
KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT VARIANT BY
DENJAMIN SU

KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT VARIANT BY
JESÚS SAIZ

KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT HIDDEN GEM VARIANT BY
TOD SMITH, CHRIS IVY & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

THE UNION #5 VARIANT BY
EMA LUPACCHINO & DAVE McCAIG

KING IN BLACK: BLACK KNIGHT


AND SO THE DREAD HAND OF FATE FALLS ONCE MORE UPON THE BLACK KNIGHT, BIDDING HIM GIRD HIS LOINS AND WAX DESTRUCTIVE UPON THE SLY SERPENT OF EVIL.
UH...NO, NO, NOT, UM--NOT THAT SERPENT. THAT'S JUST SOME DRAGON.
TECHNICALLY MORE OF AN ALIEN SUPER-PREDATOR, IN FACT.
NO, THE TRUE FIEND--THE TRUE EVIL!--LIES HERE, RAZOR-RAVENOUS WITHIN HIS GRIP.
WHISPERING ITS POISONOUS PASSIONS, URGING HIM TO SURRENDER TO ITS RED RAGE...
BEHOLD, IT HISSES, THY ARMOR IS SUNDERED...THY STEED OVERTHROWN...
TWOMP
HEY! TH-THAT'S MY THIRD-BEST HORSE, YOU BASTARD! THOSE THINGS TAKE WEEKS TO CLONE!
YOU MUST HAVE VENGEANCE! IT SAYS. BATHE IN SWEET CRIMSON! SLAUGHTER ALL THAT LIVES!
THUS COMMANDS THE ACCURSED EBONY BLADE, AND THUS OBTAINS THE LIFELONG QUEST OF ITS BEARER:
DIE! DIE! D--
TO TURN ITS DARK EDGE AGAINST EVIL...

TO FIGHT FOR THE LIGHT WITH DIGNITY AND HONOR--
AAAAAH, MY BUTT PLATES! YOU BENT MY BUTT PLATES!
--AND TO RESIST, UNTO HIS LAST BREATH, THE LONG FALL TO DARKNESS.
AGAGAGACH--
ALAS, EVERY QUEST HAS ITS, UH--ITS TRIBULATIONS.
SO HERE, PERHAPS, IS A FITTING MOMENT TO PONDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT BROUGHT HIM TO THIS JUNCTURE, WHILE HE... um...
...RE-GIRDS HIS LOINS.
STOP SPINNINGSTOP SPINNINGI'M GONNAPUU
AAUUUGH

'TWAS AT SOMBER GARRETT CASTLE, SEAT OF HIS KIN, THAT FATE FOUND HIM: PONDERING A REMEDY TO THE CURSE.
OH, ANCIENT BLADE, SOURCE OF POWER AND PERFIDY, HEAR MY PRAYER:
PLEEEEEASE STOP MAKING ME WANT TO KILL THINGS! W-WHY CAN'T YOU JUST BE A--A REGULAR MAGIC SWORD? NONPSYCHOTIC! IT'S EMBARRASSING!
WHITMAN! WHERE ART THOU, CRASS HEATHEN?!
DANE WHITMAN-- ATTEND! THY ANCESTOR HAS A QUEST FOR THEE!
OH, JOYFUL VISITOR! SIR PERCY OF SCANDIA: CHAMPION OF AN AGE BYGONE, LINGERING BEYOND FLESH TO GIVE COUNSEL TO HIS HEIRS.
WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT.
FIRST OF THE BLACK KNIGHTS-- CHOSEN BY CUNNING MERLIN FOR HIS PURITY, HIS KINDNESS, HIS PATIEN--
MOVE, SLUGABED! WHAT HAST THOU BEEN DOING WITH THY TIME?
I'VE BEEN--Y'KNOW. MEDITATING AND--SO FORTH.
"MEDITATING." TRULY, THOU ART TOUCHED BY THE MOON.
COME! THOU WOULDST NOT RECOGNIZE KNIGHTLY DUTY IF IT BIT THEE 'PON THY FUNDAMENT. EVIL APPROACHETH FROM THE STARS!
H-HOW COULD YOU POSSIBLY KNOW THAT?
BECAUSE THY DEMONIC DEVICE HATH RECEIVED COMMUNIQUÉ!
ALL AVENGERS-ADJACENT WARRIORS ARE SUMMONED TO MUSTER!
"ADJACENT"? WHAT THE HELL? I WAS A FULL MEMBER FOR YEARS! I THOUGHT--I THOUGHT WE WERE READY TO BE TEAM-UP EXCLUSIVE AGAIN!
LOOK TO THE HEAVENS, FOOL!

WHOA. WH-WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?
THE SWORD KNOWS... IT SPEAKS OF ELDER GODS... OF SHADOWS COME FORTH TO ENSLAVE AND ENGULF...
ANOTHER ALIEN INVASION, THEN. -SIGH-
WAIT... IS THAT-- IS THAT A DRAGON?
NOW, THAT'S MORE FREAKIN' LIKE IT!
WHAT'S THAT ABOUT MY KNIGHTLY DUTIES, Y'OLD GRAVE DODGER? MAN VERSUS DRAGON--THAT'S A STONE-COLD CLASSIC!
WHITMAN-- HOLD! 'WARE THE SWORD!
IT CALLS THEE TO ACT WHEN THOU OUGHT PLAN! WHITMAN!
BUT ALAS TO THE WIND THAT SWALLOWED HIS WORDS, FOR THE KNIGHT LEAPT FORTH REGARDLESS, PURPOSE PURE AND MIND TRANQUIL.
...KILL... KIIILLL...

WITH HINDSIGHT? HE, UHM. HE MIGHT PERHAPS HAVE BEEN A SMIDGE HASTY.
NNF.
W-W-WAIT... TH-THIS GOOPY STUFF...I REMEMBER THIS...
ECHOES NOW... ECHOES OF A BYGONE SAGA...*
...THERE IS A GREAT EVIL ABROAD. THE EBONY BLADE MAY BE ONE OF THE ONLY WEAPONS IN EXISTENCE THAT CAN DEFEAT IT..
...IT IS CALLED... KNULL.
*SEEK YE SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK TO WITNESS THE THRILLING TALE. OUT NOW! --TOMMY G.
HE FANCIES, NOW, HE CAN FEEL THE SWORD SMIRK. IT UNDERSTANDS ITS NECESSITY.
VVVV
IT KNOWS HE MUST BOW TO ITS PRIMACY--TAKE ITS LEAD--AND SO SURRENDER A LITTLE OF HIMSELF.
KABOOM
IT HURTS HIS HEART.
IN THIS MANNER DOES IT STRENGTHEN.
SLIIISH
YAAAAAAA!
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE HERE. AN UGLY ANIMA. IT SEEPS, VIRAL, AT THE EMPTY EDGES OF THE BLADE...
...SLINKING FORTH TENEBROUS TENDRILS TO TASTE...HIS...MIND...
KNULL.

YES, KNULL. SPYING THROUGH THE OBSIDIAN FLESH OF THE WYRM.
RUMMAGING THROUGH MIND AND MEMORY. AMUSED AT THE BRIGHT PAGEANTRY OF THE FAMILY MYTH.
...THE BLADE FORGED OF STARSTONE... THE HALF DEMON MERLIN, SEEKING A WARRIOR PURE ENOUGH TO ENDURE ITS THIRST...
...AND FINDING BRAVE PERCY. THAT FIRST DEFENDER OF ARTHUR'S DREAM.
THE STAR-GOD SLITHERS ACROSS THE BLOODLINE... ACROSS FALLEN KNIGHTS AND CORRUPTED KILLERS-- THOSE TOO WEAK TO WITHSTAND THE CURSE.
KNULL CARES NOTHING FOR THEIR SHAME. HE HAS EYES ONLY FOR THE SWORD...
AND THE BLACK KNIGHT SEES, AS THE GREAT BEAST SNARLS ITS LAST AND BEGINS TO FALL--
--THAT KNULL INTENDS TO HAVE THE BLADE...
WH... Y...YOU'RE READING MY MIND...
IT'S--IT'S THIS DAMN MUCK! I-IT'S READING ME TO GET A FIX ON THE SWORD...!

AND THE SWORD...
WANTS...
...TO BE FOUND.
AND SO IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE BLACK KNIGHT, SCOURGE OF TYRANNY, CHAMPION OF JUSTICE, CLENCHES HIS TEETH TO THE SHATTER POINT--
YOU WON'T FIND IT THROUGH ME YOU WON'T FIND IT THROUGH ME
--AND PERFORMS HIS GREATEST FEAT.
HA!
OH.
HIGH ABOVE, A GHASTLY BLACK BLISTER SPREADS ACROSS THE CELESTIAL VAULT, ENCIRCLING THE EARTH IN ITS SHADOW--
--AND THE KNIGHT IS GRATEFUL FOR IT. SOMETHING, AT LEAST, TO OCCUPY HIS MIND--
--SO HE NEED NOT WATCH THE EARTH RISE UP TO BREAK HIM.

AAAAA--
(GOT YOU!)*
(YOU CAN, UH...YOU CAN STOP SCREAMING NOW. YOU'RE GETTING PUKE ALL DOWN YOUR BREASTPLATE.)
*TRANSLATED FROM MANDARIN.
WH-WH-WHAT THE HELL IS H--
AH, AMERICAN! WELCOME TO SHANGHAI!
I'M AERO.

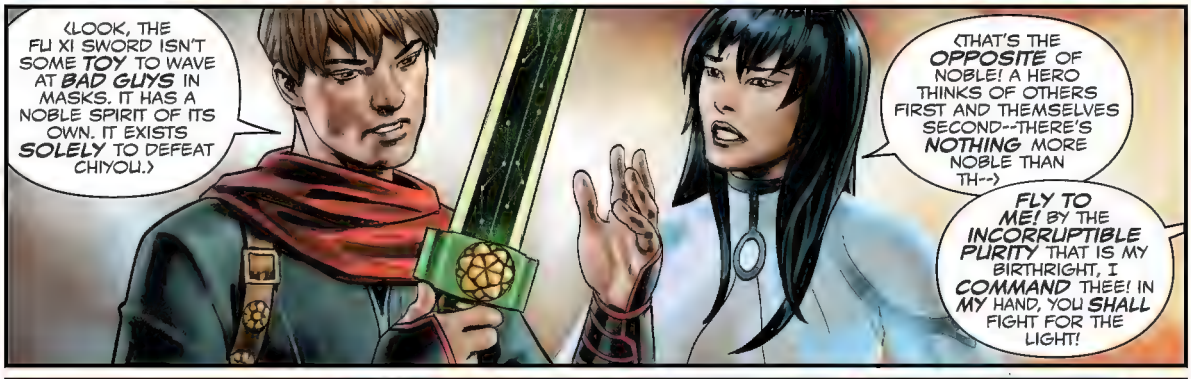
WAIT. OH WOW-- THAT HELMET! YOU'RE THE BLACK KNIGHT, AREN'T YOU?
I... Y-YOU... YOU'VE HEARD OF ME?
OF COURSE! YOU WERE FIRED FROM THE AVENGERS BECAUSE YOUR SWORD MAKES YOU ALL MURDERY! PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
WHAT? N-NO, THAT'S-- THAT'S NOT WHAT-- BY MY TROTH, I HAD VALOROUS QUESTS TO--TO QUESTIFY ALONE-- SO--
ALSO, I HEARD YOU STARTED NARRATING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES IN THIS FAKEY OLDE WORLD DIALECT--
WHAT? N-NAY, SWEET MAIDEN, THAT IS N--
--IN AN EMBARRASSING ATTEMPT TO EVOKE SOME SORT OF CHIVALRIC IDYLL--
LISTEN, I THINK MAYBE YOUR ENGLISH NEEDS SOME WORK, BECAUSE--
--IN THE HOPE OF PREVENTING THE BLADE DRIVING YOU SUPERCRAZYPANTS PSYCHO.
THERE'S A WHOLE REDDIT ABOUT IT.
LOOK, THERE'S A SERIOUS SITUATION UNDERWAY. I APPRECIATE YOU, Y'KNOW, SAVING PEOPLE AND SO ON, BUT... I'VE BEEN ACTIVATED BY TONY STARK HIMSELF.
OOH! ME TOO!
WHAT? Y-YOU MEAN, YOU'RE...?
AVENGERS-ADJACENT, THAT'S RIGHT! MY GOODNESS, THERE ARE SO MANY OF THESE CREATURES...
RIGHT. EXACTLY. A-AND I COULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT IF MAYBE YOU JUST HELP ME FIND MY STUPID SWOAAAAAAAA--

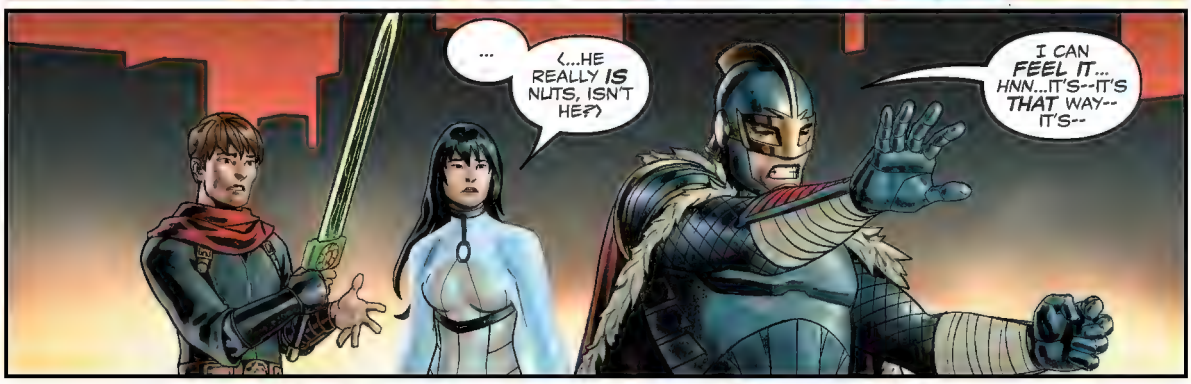
YAAAAA!
SLISH
...SWORD.
HE PREFERS SWORD MASTER, ACTUALLY.
(LIN LIE! HOW ARE YOU?)
(AERO. HEY--ISN'T THAT THAT CRAZY EX-AVENGER WHO--)
(--WENT FULL SMEAGOL OVER A BIG CLUMSY SWORD? MM-HMM.)
(DOES HE KNOW HE'S GOT PUKE ALL DOWN HIS CAPE?)
(WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, LIN?)

(ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? THESE MONSTERS--THEY'RE MINIONS OF CHIYOU!)
(CHIYOU? YOU MEAN THE--THE GOD OF WAR FROM THE OLD EPICS?)
HEY, WHAT'RE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT? IS IT ME?
IT'S ME, ISN'T IT?
(WHO ELSE BUT CHIYOU WOULD SEND THESE DEMONS? THE HEIR TO THE SWORD OF FU XI MUST FACE THEM!)
(I WILL VANQUISH THE LEGIONS OF CHIYOU! I WILL FIND MY FATHER!)
OKAY, SO THERE'S THIS SYMBIOTE-GOD CALLED KNULL INVADING THE EARTH, AND I THINK MY SWORD'S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HURT HIS MONSTERS, SO--
SLLLICK
EEEEEEEEE!
(I'M ASSUMING YOU DIDN'T GET A MESSAGE FROM TONY STARK?)
(STARK? THE IRON GUY? COURSE NOT. I'M NOT AVENGERS-ADJACENT.)
SO, UH, A-ANYWAYS--THE--THE EBONY BLADE. I GOTTA FIND IT. I NEED IT, Y'KNOW? IN A TOTALLY NON-JUNKIE KIND OF WAY.
(HONESTLY? I THINK THESE AMERICAN HEROES ARE ALL IN LOVE WITH THEIR OWN FLAWS. JUST LOOK AT THIS GUY... HE'S NUTS...)
(HE'S NOT THE ONE FIGHTING AN IMAGINARY ENEMY, LIN. THESE MONSTERS AREN'T FROM CHIYOU. IT'S A SPACE THING.)
SOMETIMES IF I COMMAND IT JUST RIGHT--LIKE, REALLY SHOW IT WHO'S BOSS?--IT'LL COME FLYING RIGHT TO MY HAND.

(NOT CHIYOU? BUT THEN-- THERE'S NO POINT IN MY BEING HERE.)
(WHAT?)
MIND YOU, SOMETIMES IT GETS OVEREXCITED AND COMES FLYING TIP-FIRST, SO, UH--YOU MIGHT WANNA GIMME SOME ROOM HERE...

(I MEAN--YOU'VE GOT THIS, RIGHT? YOU'RE AERO! ALL THIS SAVING FOLKS STUFF IS SECOND NATURE TO YOU. THAT'S WHY THEY LOVE YOU.)
(WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING? IF YOU CAN HELP, YOU SHOULD!)
OH, THRICE-CURSED BLADE, DOOM OF MY PEDIGREE, TRANSMIT THYSELF NOW UNTO MY GRASP!


(LOOK, THE FU XI SWORD ISN'T SOME TOY TO WAVE AT BAD GUYS IN MASKS. IT HAS A NOBLE SPIRIT OF ITS OWN. IT EXISTS SOLELY TO DEFEAT CHIYOU.)
(THAT'S THE OPPOSITE OF NOBLE! A HERO THINKS OF OTHERS FIRST AND THEMSELVES SECOND--THERE'S NOTHING MORE NOBLE THAN TH--)
FLY TO ME! BY THE INCORRUPTIBLE PURITY THAT IS MY BIRTHRIGHT, I COMMAND THEE! IN MY HAND, YOU SHALL FIGHT FOR THE LIGHT!


...
(...HE REALLY IS NUTS, ISN'T HE?)
I CAN FEEL IT... HNN...IT'S--IT'S THAT WAY-- IT'S--

THWIP

UM.
GIVE ME THE SWORD, PLEASE.
BUT I--I DIDN'T TAKE IT. IT JUST-- CAME TO ME.
SWORD. NOW, PLEASE. NOW.
I--I CAN'T. IT WON'T LET GO...
(I'M GONNA GUESS THE NOBLE SPIRIT IN YOUR SWORD DISAGREES WITH YOUR IDEA OF HOW TO BEHAVE IN A CRISIS.)
GIVE! BACK! THE SWORD! NOW!
ALL RIGHT, SCREW THIS. THAT KID'S TOO YOUNG TO BE WAVIN' AROUND A PIGSTICKER ANYWAY. I NEED TO GET BACK WHAT'S MINE.
THE EBONY BLADE'S OVER... THERE SOMEWHERE. WE CAN DEFINITELY, DEFINITELY USE IT TO SAVE THE WORLD.
SO, UH. IT'S AERO, RIGHT? YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BACK UP AN EX-AVENGER?

AND SO IT COMES TO PASS THAT THE BLACK KNIGHT, HAVING SAVED THE WIND-WITCH OF THE EAST, WAS FETED BY HER GRATEFUL PEOPLE.
YOU'RE DOING THAT NARRATING THING, BY THE WAY.
I--I--I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
THIEF! THAT THIEF STOLE MY SWORD!
AERO!
OH MY GOD, SHE'S UH-MAAAZING!
GO, AERO!
LOOK, IT'S HER!
HE'S NOT EVEN HOLDING IT R--
...
OH NO.
SKREEEEEEEE!

THUK
BOOOMFF
(NO POINT IN YOU BEING HERE, HUH?)
(THAT'S MORE LIKE IT, KID.)
THIS SWORD... HRR...HOW, UH... HOW MAGIC IS IT, EXACTLY?
IT'S NOT MAGIC!
IT'S DIVINE!
NOT FIT FOR A CRAZY, PSYCHO AMERICAN! GIVE IT BACK!
I'M NOT A PSYCHO. LIKE--READ THE REDDIT, PAL! ALL THAT DARK STUFF COMES FROM THE EBONY BLADE.

IT CAN CUT THROUGH ANYTHING. NOBODY'S EVER FIGURED HOW POWERFUL IT REALLY IS.
GRAAA!
AND THAT'S THE POINT. WE CAN'T LET THIS KNULL GUY GET HIS HANDS ON IT.
ONLY I CAN WIELD IT SAFELY--AND NOT JUST BECAUSE I'M A PRODIGY AT BLADECRAFT.
(UGH. HE'S STILL HOLDING IT WRONG.)
YOU SEE, THERE'S SOMETHING--EXCEPTIONAL--ABOUT MY BLOODLINE. SOME NATURAL QUALITY OF--OF SPIRITUAL PURITY.
UH. MR. BLACK KNIGHT?
'PON MY TROTH, ONLY I MAY CONFOUND THE UNHOLY THIRST OF THE BLADE AND HARNESS ITS IMPOSSIBLE PUISSANCE FOR GOOD!
DANE!
FOR VERILY, I AM THE BLACK KNIGHT, DARK CHAMPION OF VALOR, AND--
DANE, STOP IT! STOP!
S...
STOP WHAT?

YOU WERE, UH. YOU WERE STABBING THAT DEAD MONSTER.
A LOT.
ALSO THESE BUILDINGS. AND THAT CAR.
(I TOLD YOU-- HE'S INSANE. HE BLAMES THIS EBONY BLADE, BUT IT'S HIM.)
FU XI SWORD. NOW.
NO! I NEED IT! I'M--I'M JUST BORROWING IT TILL I GET MINE BACK! IT CHOSE ME!
NNNF! WHY'S IT FEEL SO HEAVY?
I THINK IT'S TRYING TO UN-CHOOSE YOU.
THUM
IIIIIT'S MINE!
ENOUGH. GIVE IT BACK NOW, OR--
GET OFF! GET OFF!
OHCRAP, WAIT.
WAITWAIT WAITWAITNOT AGAINNOTAG--

AND, OH, THERE IS CACOPHONY.

THE BOY'S VOICE, CRYING IN CONFUSION. THE BRAVE KNIGHT'S, MURMURING A PRAYER.

OH GOD OH &#%& GET OUT GET OUT OF MY HEAD--

AND HIS. KNULL'S. MIRTH-MIRED AND CRUEL AS IT PUNCTURES THEM BOTH...

SOMEWHERE-- AS IF 'TWERE ANOTHER WORLD-- THE MAIDEN CRIES OUT--

(THE DRAGONS ARE...FLOCKING TOGETHER. WH-WHAT ARE THEY DOING...?)

THE KNIGHT HASTENS TO AID HER. HE SPARES NOT A THOUGHT FOR HIS OWN DESIRES--

MINE.

--BUT THE SLITHERING EVIL DRIVES DEEPER INTO HIS BREAST AND BEDEVILS THE VERY BEDROCK OF HIS CREED AND CAUSE...

...POOR LITTLE FOOL. YOU REALLY CAN'T SEE IT, CAN YOU?

THE SWORD, BOY. THE SWORD. I WILL HAVE IT. BUT-- HAHAHA! HOW AMUSING THAT YOU TRULY DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS.

I--I KNOW ENOUGH! A CURSED THING FROM THE STARS, FORGED BY MERLIN TO--

I WAS LOOKING FOR YOUR LITTLE BLACK SWORD, WHITMAN--BUT I SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT ME A BONUS... HOW GENEROUS...

ANOTHER STAR-FORGED THING...ANOTHER WORLD-ENDER YOU WORMS CAN BARELY COMPREHEND...

LIN LIE'S SOUL IS INSPECTED. INTERROGATED. JUDGED...

CHIYOU, IS IT? HAHAHA... THAT'S YOUR OBSESSION? JUST ONE MORE ELDER SHADOW, DRESSED IN LOCAL LEGEND...

BUT. SUCH AN ATTRACTIVE FORM...HMMM.

YES, YES, YES. AND HE SOUGHT A WARRIOR PURE TO WITHSTAND ITS THIRST. YOU IDIOT.

I CAN TASTE WHAT'S IN YOUR SOUL BETTER THAN YOU CAN. PURITY? PLEASE.

DID YOU TRULY BELIEVE HE STRUGGLED TO FIND MEN OF PURE HEART IN CAMELOT? HA! THE DAMN PLACE WAS CRAWLING WITH THEM.

NO. THE TRUTH...? WHEN MEN OF LIGHT HELD THE BLADE...WHEN KINGS AND PALADINS TOOK IT UP...

ITS MAGIC DIED.

N-NO, THAT'S, THAT'S NOT WH--
MERLIN LIED. SIR PERCY WAS CHOSEN FOR HIS WEAKNESS.
AN ANGRY MAN. A DEPRESSIVE. A MAN BESET BY VOICES AND VITUPERATION. THAT'S WHAT MERLIN NEEDED.
THAT'S THE LEGACY OF YOUR KIN, BOY. YOU'VE HAD IT WRONG ALL THIS TIME. THE EBONY BLADE CAN ONLY BE WIELDED TO ITS MIGHTIEST POTENTIAL...
...BY THOSE IMPURE OF HEART.
TWO IMPERFECT HALVES. TWO INCOMPLETE ARTICLES, UNITED, TO FORM A BERSERKER IN BLACK.
SYMBIOSIS. THAT IS THE OFFICE OF MY DIVINITY--AND THAT IS WHY YOUR BLADE BELONGS WITH ME.
YOU--YOU CAN'T HAVE IT! YOU'RE WRONG! I'M--I'M NOT A KILLER! I'M PURE OF HEART! THE CURSE IS IN THE SWORD!
IS THAT SO? THEN... OPEN YOUR EYES, LITTLE HERO...

...AND SEE HOW PURE YOU ARE.
AAAAA--!
(IT'S FINE. I'M HERE. YOU-- YOU WEREN'T TO KNOW.)
FWIP
(YOU WEREN'T TO KNOW HE'S EVIL.)
UH... GUYS?

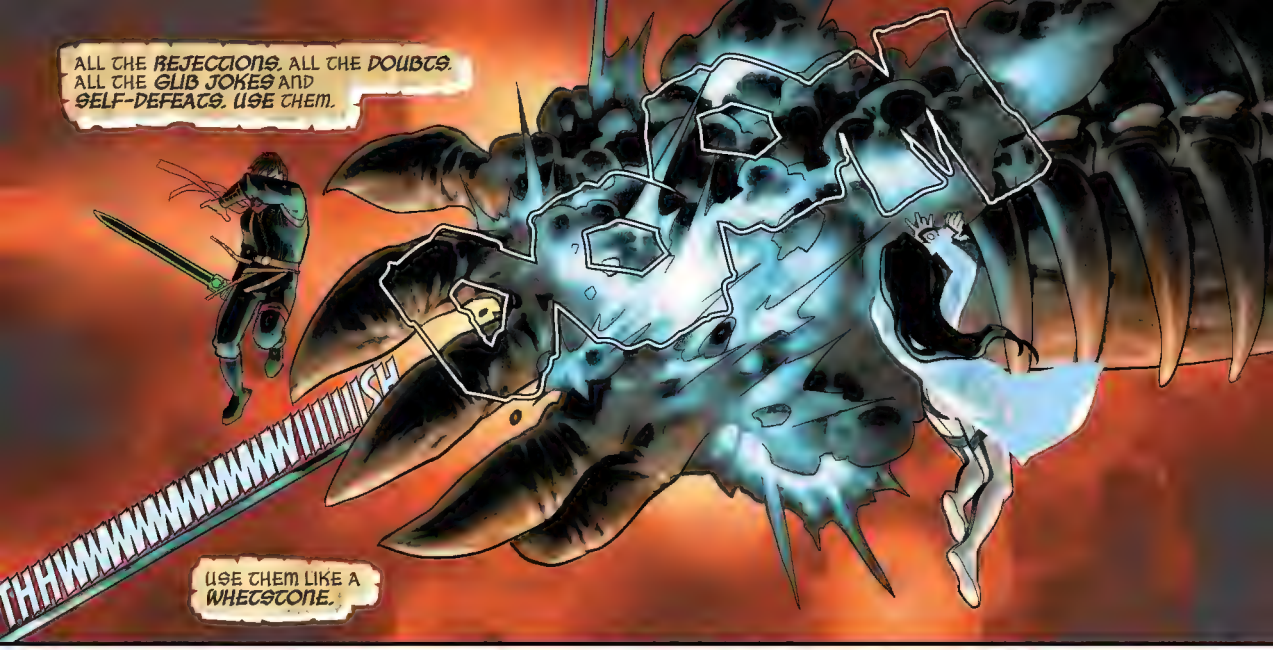
...S-SPEAKING OF EVIL.

(IT'S CHIYOU! YOU WERE RIGHT! THE GREAT GOD OF W--)
(NO. IT'S JUST KNULL. HE'S BORROWING THE SHAPE TO SCARE PEOPLE.)
NNF.
(WH-WHAT'S IT LOOKING FOR?)
(THERE'S SOMETHING UP THERE... I CAN'T MAKE IT OUT... WHAT'S--)
AT HIS LOWEST... AT HIS MOST BROKEN...
FOOOM
...THAT IS WHEN THE WRETCHED TREASURE CHOOSES TO RETURN TO ITS MASTER.
THOR
IT'S A LIE. IT'S ALL A LIE.
G-GET IT AWAY FROM ME...
(I, UH. I DON'T THINK HE'S GOING TO BE MUCH USE.)
(YOU READY TO BE A HERO, KID?)
(I... DON'T KNOW...)

(BUT I'M READY TO TRY.)
FWOOPH

THE BLACK KNIGHT ALREADY KNEW.

HE HAS ALWAYS SENSED THE DARKNESS, ASLUMBER IN HIS BREAST.
HAS ALWAYS KNOWN THAT BENEATH THE ARMOR TREMBLES A MAN SWIFT TO ANGER. A MIND MUCH GIVEN TO GRUDGES.
A HEART CRUSHED TOO OFTEN BY WOE-- WITHOUT REASON OR RECOURSE.
HE IS A MAN OF PERFORMATIVE BLUSTER. OF BOMBAST AND BRAGGADOCIO, STRETCHED TAUT OVER SECRET SADNESS.
A MAN PARALYZED IF UNDISTRACTED.
AN IMPERFECT MAN.
OH, PITIABLE KNIGHT--LOOK UPON THEM. TRUE HEROES. CHAMPIONS OF THE LIGHT. COULD IT BE THAT THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH?
THAT THE TRUEST FEAT IS NOT TO VANQUISH THY DEMONS...
...BUT TO OWN THEM?


ALL THE REJECTIONS. ALL THE DOUBTS. ALL THE GLIB JOKES AND SELF-DEFEATS. USE THEM.
THHWWW

SOMETIMES THE WORLD *NEEDS* A FOOL PREPARED TO GET LOST IN THE DARK--
AAAA--!
--IN ORDER THAT OTHERS MAY BEAR THE LIGHT.

YOUR... YOUR SWORD. IT KILLED HIM. IT KILLED KNULL!
NO.
JUST AN AVATAR. HE'S STILL OUT THERE. EVEN THE EBONY BLADE WON'T BE ENOUGH-- NOT ON ITS OWN.
BESIDES-- IT WASN'T THE SWORD THAT DID THIS, LIN.
IT WAS HIM. A WEAPON'S ONLY AS GOOD AS THE HAND IT'S IN.
SHE'S RIGHT, KID. AND-- THAT BLADE OF YOURS? THAT'S GONNA BE LEGENDARY SOMEDAY.
FOR ALL THE RIGHT REASONS.
L-LISTEN, I WANNA THANK YOU BOTH. Y-YOU'RE A CREDIT TO THE-- I DUNNO--THE GLOBAL HEROING COMMUNITY, SO, UH...
HEY. WH-WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHERE DO YOU THINK?
NEW YORK. MR. STARK'S MESSAGE SAID TO GO THERE. THESE THINGS WON'T STOP UNLESS WE BEAT KNULL DIRECTLY.
ARE YOU COMING?

VERILY.

THE UNION #1 VARIANT BY
PAUL GRIST & NOLAN WOODARD

THE UNION #4 VARIANT BY
MIKE McKONE & MORRY HOLLOWELL

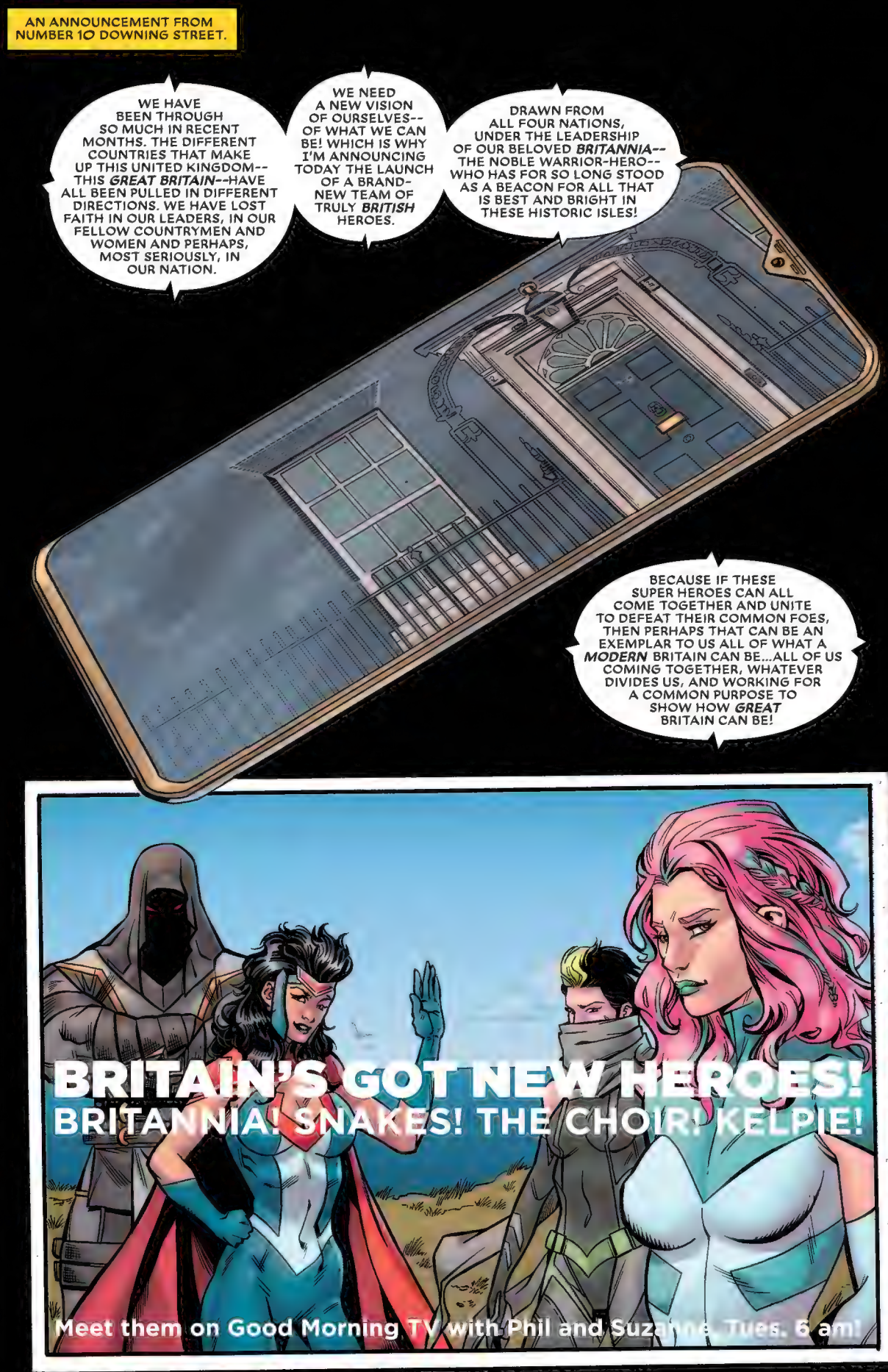
THE UNION #1 DESIGN VARIANT BY
R.D. SILVA

THE UNION #2 DESIGN VARIANT BY
R.D. SILVA

THE UNION #1

THE BRITANNIA PROJECT PART ONE: THE FLAG GAME

YOU WERE *TOO LATE,* BRITANNIA! MY APATHY RAY IS ALREADY SENDING ITS SIGNAL ACROSS THE LAND!
SOON THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN WILL BE SAPPED OF ALL ENERGY AND UNABLE TO RESIST *DOC CROC* AND HIS *ALLIGATOR ARMY!*
IT'S *NEVER* TOO LATE, DOC! THE *SPIRIT* OF BRITAIN IS *BIGGER* THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE!
EVEN IN ITS DARKEST HOUR, YOU'LL *NEVER* EXTINGUISH IT!
KERASH
HEY, CROC! WANT TO PLAY *"CATCH THE STONE"?*
BUT HOW CAN YOU DO THAT?! I HAD YOU DEFEATED!
KLONK
I THINK YOU UNDERESTIMATE THE *DEFINING CHARACTER* OF THE BRITISH PEOPLE, CROC!
WHEN IT SEEMS LIKE THERE'S NO REASON TO GO ON... WE'RE JUST *TOO STUBBORN* TO GIVE UP!
OH *PUHLEEZE!!* SPARE ME THE SPEECHES!!


AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET.
WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH IN RECENT MONTHS. THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES THAT MAKE UP THIS UNITED KINGDOM--THIS GREAT BRITAIN--HAVE ALL BEEN PULLED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS. WE HAVE LOST FAITH IN OUR LEADERS, IN OUR FELLOW COUNTRYMEN AND WOMEN AND PERHAPS, MOST SERIOUSLY, IN OUR NATION.
WE NEED A NEW VISION OF OURSELVES--OF WHAT WE CAN BE! WHICH IS WHY I'M ANNOUNCING TODAY THE LAUNCH OF A BRAND-NEW TEAM OF TRULY BRITISH HEROES.
DRAWN FROM ALL FOUR NATIONS, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF OUR BELOVED BRITANNIA--THE NOBLE WARRIOR-HERO--WHO HAS FOR SO LONG STOOD AS A BEACON FOR ALL THAT IS BEST AND BRIGHT IN THESE HISTORIC ISLES!
BECAUSE IF THESE SUPER HEROES CAN ALL COME TOGETHER AND UNITE TO DEFEAT THEIR COMMON FOES, THEN PERHAPS THAT CAN BE AN EXEMPLAR TO US ALL OF WHAT A MODERN BRITAIN CAN BE...ALL OF US COMING TOGETHER, WHATEVER DIVIDES US, AND WORKING FOR A COMMON PURPOSE TO SHOW HOW GREAT BRITAIN CAN BE!
BRITAIN'S GOT NEW HEROES!
BRITANNIA! SNAKES! THE CHOIR! KELPIE!
Meet them on Good Morning TV with Phil and Suzanne, Tues. 6 am!

JUST OFF THE WEST COAST OF ENGLAND...
WELL, WE MADE IT THIS FAR.
BREAN DOWN FORT.
MADE IT? THERE WERE TWELVE OF US WHEN WE STARTED!
EVEN THE BONUS ISN'T ENOUGH TO COVER THIS.
WHAT? YOU'RE GETTING PAID FOR THIS?
SURE. AND WE GET A BONUS IF THE FLAG GETS PLANTED.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IT FOR?
QUEEN AND COUNTRY. APPARENTLY.
THAT AND A CUP OF TEA.
GO!

YOU EVER PLAY THAT GAME WITH FLAGS?
ONE TEAM HAS A FLAG AND THEY HAVE TO PLANT IT ON A PREDETERMINED SPOT TO CLAIM THE TERRITORY AS THEIR OWN. THE OTHER TEAM HAS TO STOP THEM.
IT'S JUST A GAME FOR CHILDREN REALLY.
IT'S HOW BRITAIN BUILT AN EMPIRE.
AND COMING UP TODAY ON *GOOD MORNING UK*, WE'LL BE TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT THE NATION'S FAVOURITE OBSESSION-- *THE BRITANNIA PROJECT.*
YES, WE'LL BRING YOU ALL THE LATEST GOSS IN A LIVE LINKUP FROM A SECRET LOCATION IN SOMERSET AND AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH BRITAIN'S MOST BELOVED SUPER HERO! CAN'T WAIT!
HAVE YOU VOTED FOR YOUR CHOICE OF TEAM NAME YET, SUZANNE? I'M *TEAM UK!*
I SEE SOOPEY MCSOOPERHEROCLUB IS STILL UP THERE, PHIL, BUT REMEMBER, IT'S YOUR VOTE THAT COUNTS, SO EVERYONE NEEDS TO DO THEIR BIT!
IT IS THE PEOPLE'S TEAM, SO WE ALL NEED TO VOTE!

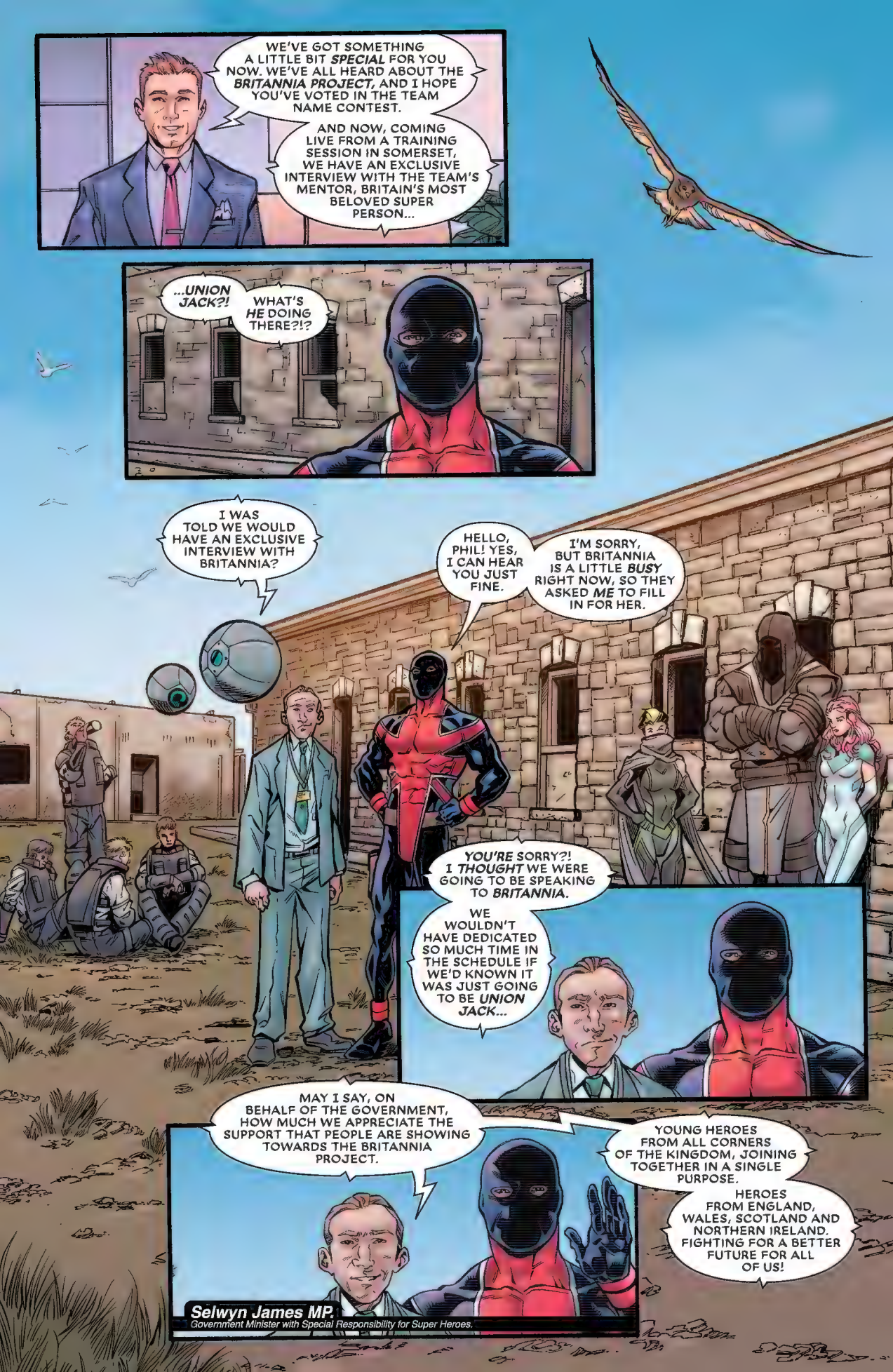
IT'S TAKEN THEM FORTY-FIVE MINUTES TO REACH THIS POINT.
NOW THERE'S JUST TWO OF THEM LEFT.
SPLASH
AND THEY HADN'T EVEN MET THE ENEMY YET.
IT'S OKAY. JUST A PUDDLE...
NO. NO. NO.
IT HASN'T RAINED HERE FOR NEARLY TWO WEEKS NOW...
THE ENEMY'S JUST PICKED THEM OFF, ONE BY ONE.
;GLUB!;
YOU CAN'T DO THIS! STOP IT!
YOU'RE KILLING HIM!!
LET HIM GO, KELPIE.
NOW!

HUNUH!
THAT'S IT.
÷KAFF÷ HUNUH...
÷KAFF÷ ÷KAFF÷
THIS IS WHERE THE GAME ENDS.
TWO HUNDRED YARDS. THAT'S ALL IT IS. HE CAN DO THAT.
THIS IS JOE CHAPMAN.
CALL HIM UNION JACK.
HE'S NOT THE FIRST TO TAKE THE NAME. IT USED TO BELONG TO THE FALSWORTH FAMILY.
HE'S THE FIRST WORKING-CLASS MAN TO WEAR IT THOUGH. NO MAGIC POWERS. NOTHING BEYOND HIS OWN ATHLETIC ABILITIES AND BELIEF IN HIMSELF.

HE'S NOT SURE HOW LONG HE'S WORN THE FLAG.
HAS IT BEEN FOUR YEARS? SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE FORTY.
BUT NOW? IT'S LIKE HE JUST PUT IT ON NEW THIS MORNING.
HE'S A MAN RENEWED. A MAN REBORN.
NOTHING CAN STOP HIM NOW!
OOF!!!
READY TO CALL IT A DAY, JOE?
EXCEPT, POSSIBLY, HER.
BRITANNIA.

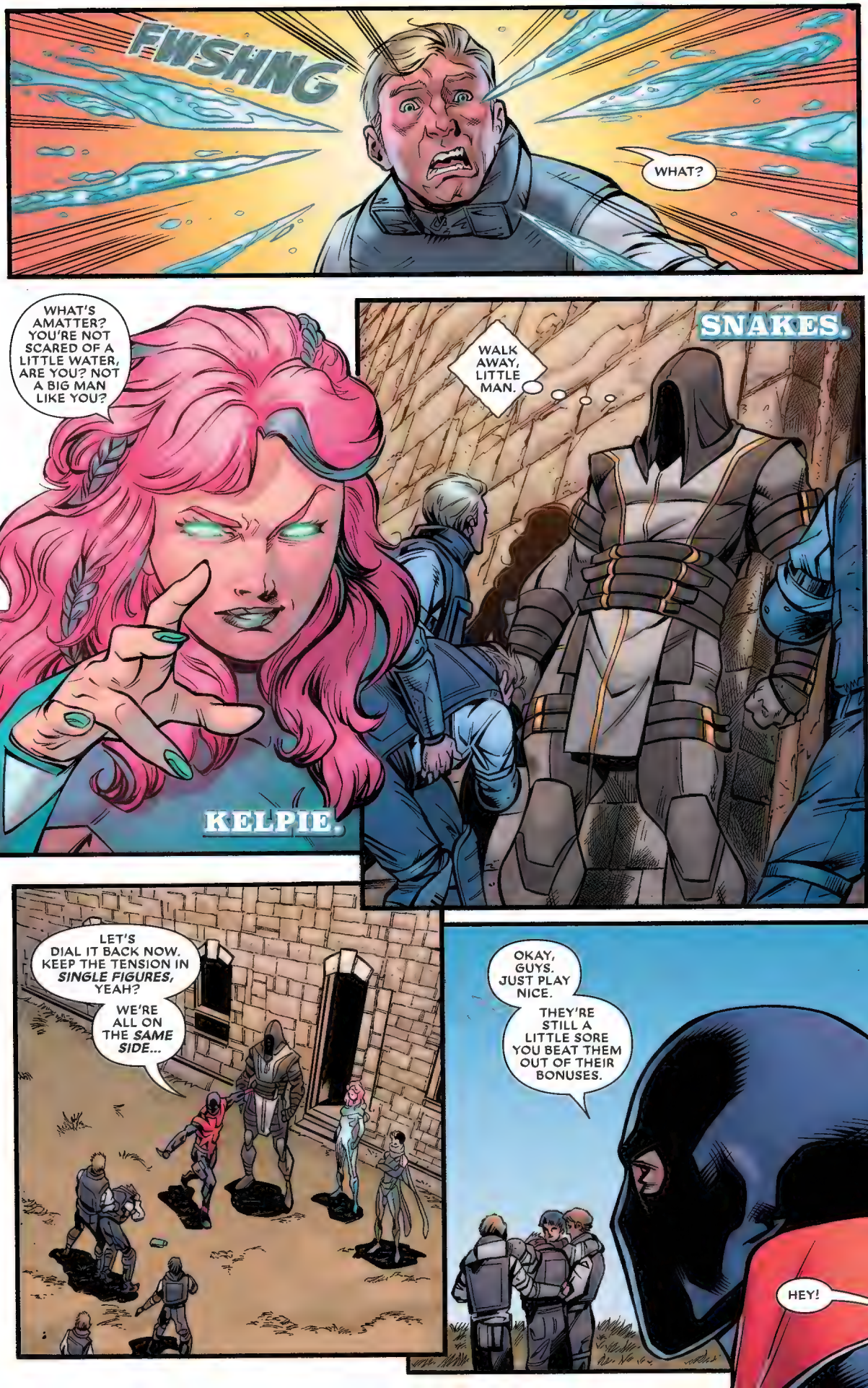
YOU ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO STOP ME...
...BUT NOT TODAY, TANYA!
HEY?!!
OKAY. YOU WANT TO PLAY NASTY?
I'VE BEEN PLAYING THAT GAME BEFORE YOU WERE BORN!
WOK
OOOF!
YOU GOT ME, GIRL...
...BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T STOPPED ME!

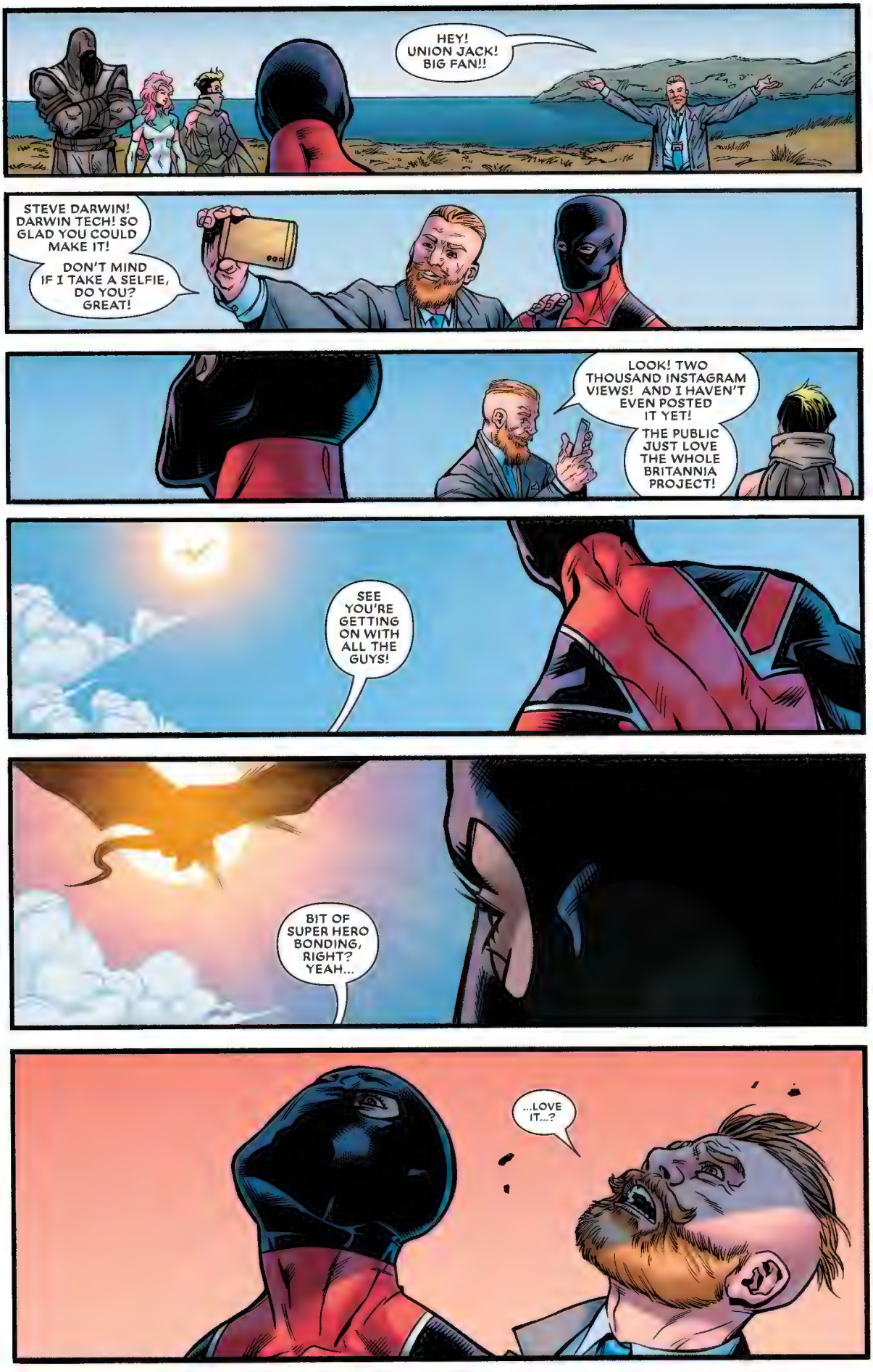
THWUMP
YEAH!
WE MADE IT!!!
BONUSES FOR EVERYONE!
DARWIN
MAYBE, JOEY BOY...BUT I GOT THE FLAG!
TECH
...
I'M GONNAKILL THATSTEVE DARWIN...


WE'VE GOT SOMETHING A LITTLE BIT *SPECIAL* FOR YOU NOW. WE'VE ALL HEARD ABOUT THE *BRITANNIA PROJECT,* AND I HOPE YOU'VE VOTED IN THE TEAM NAME CONTEST.
AND NOW, COMING LIVE FROM A TRAINING SESSION IN SOMERSET, WE HAVE AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE TEAM'S MENTOR, BRITAIN'S MOST BELOVED SUPER PERSON...
...*UNION JACK?!*
WHAT'S *HE* DOING THERE?!?
I WAS TOLD WE WOULD HAVE AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH BRITANNIA?
HELLO, PHIL! YES, I CAN HEAR YOU JUST FINE.
I'M SORRY, BUT BRITANNIA IS A LITTLE *BUSY* RIGHT NOW, SO THEY ASKED *ME* TO FILL IN FOR HER.
YOU'RE SORRY?! I *THOUGHT* WE WERE GOING TO BE SPEAKING TO *BRITANNIA.*
WE WOULDN'T HAVE DEDICATED SO MUCH TIME IN THE SCHEDULE IF WE'D KNOWN IT WAS JUST GOING TO BE *UNION JACK...*
MAY I SAY, ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT, HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT THAT PEOPLE ARE SHOWING TOWARDS THE BRITANNIA PROJECT.
YOUNG HEROES FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE KINGDOM, JOINING TOGETHER IN A SINGLE PURPOSE.
HEROES FROM ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND. FIGHTING FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL OF US!
Selwyn James MP.
Government Minister with Special Responsibility for Super Heroes.

I SAID NO LOGOS. THAT WAS THE UNDERSTANDING. I'M NOT DOING THIS TO PROMOTE YOUR BRAND, DARWIN!
I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU REPRESENT-- YOUR IDEALISM. YOU ARE BRITAIN'S DREAM, BRITANNIA!
AND THAT'S WHY, AS FINANCIAL BACKER OF THIS PROJECT, I'M PAYING TOP DOLLAR FOR IT.
SNAP
WE'RE LIVING IN A NEW BRITAIN NOW. TIME TO WAKE UP.
SO YOU'RE THE FREAKS? DON'T LOOK ALL THAT TO ME.

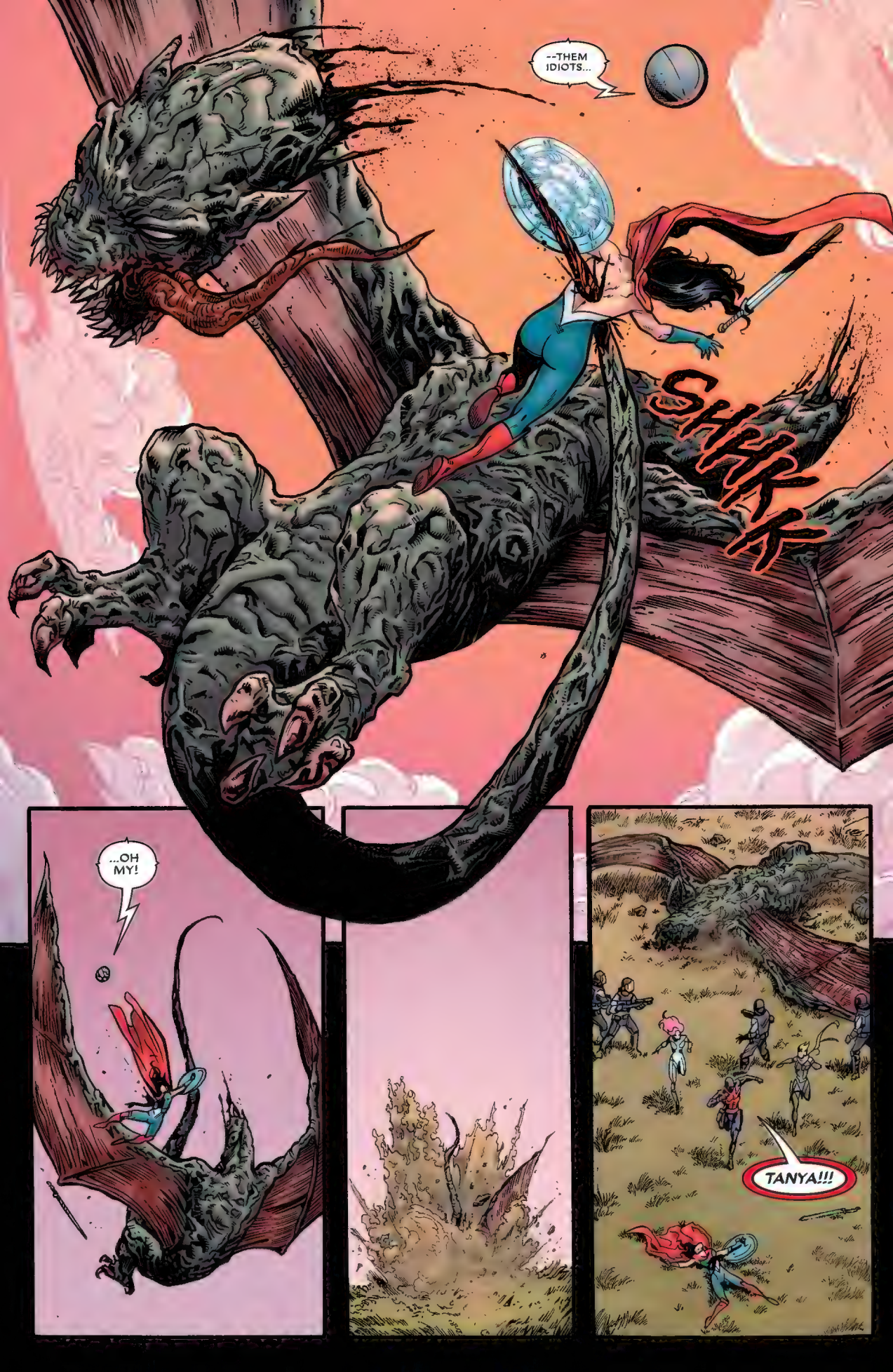
YOU'RE NOT THAT SPECIAL YOURSELF, FFRIND.
EEEEE...
THE CHOIR.
WHAT'S THAT? YOU SAY SOMETHING, GIRL?
SPEAK UP...I...
I CAN'T...
...STAND UP...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HIM?!
STOP IT!


FWSHNG
WHAT?
WHAT'S AMATTER? YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF A LITTLE WATER, ARE YOU? NOT A BIG MAN LIKE YOU?
KELPIE.
WALK AWAY, LITTLE MAN.
SNAKES.
LET'S DIAL IT BACK NOW. KEEP THE TENSION IN *SINGLE FIGURES,* YEAH?
WE'RE ALL ON THE *SAME SIDE...*
OKAY, GUYS. JUST PLAY NICE.
THEY'RE STILL A LITTLE SORE YOU BEAT THEM OUT OF THEIR BONUSES.
HEY!


HEY! UNION JACK! BIG FAN!!
STEVE DARWIN! DARWIN TECH! SO GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT!
DON'T MIND IF I TAKE A SELFIE, DO YOU? GREAT!
LOOK! TWO THOUSAND INSTAGRAM VIEWS! AND I HAVEN'T EVEN POSTED IT YET!
THE PUBLIC JUST LOVE THE WHOLE BRITANNIA PROJECT!
SEE YOU'RE GETTING ON WITH ALL THE GUYS!
BIT OF SUPER HERO BONDING, RIGHT? YEAH...
...LOVE IT...?

WHAT THE BLAZES IS THAT?!
I'M NO EXPERT, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE A *DRAGON* TO ME.
AND SAINT GEORGE HASN'T TURNED UP TODAY!

GOOD OLD GEORGE! NEVER CAME TO ENGLAND, THOUGH. OR KILLED A DRAGON.
LOOKS LIKE THAT'S MY JOB! AGAIN!
HELLO? BRITANNIA?
HI, THIS IS PHIL HERE...
...WOULD THIS BE A GOOD TIME TO GET AN INTERVIEW?
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK IS HAPPENING HERE?
GET OUT OF MY FACE, YOU IDIOT!
NOW, BRITANNIA, I DON'T THINK OUR VIEWERS WOULD APPRECIATE YOU CALLING--


--THEM IDIOTS...
SHRK
...OH MY!
TANYA!!!

DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS THING IS...
UGLY-LOOKING BUGGER, ISN'T IT?
WHUMP
SLSSH
AT LEAST WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT ANYMORE!
IT'S OKAY, BRITANNIA. HANG ON. YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY...
HA! NICE TRY, JOE...
SLSSH
SLSSH
...BUT YOU COULD NEVER FOOL ME...NOBODY'S GOING TO FIX THIS...NOT THIS...

NO... DON'T WORRY, JOEY BOY...
...I HAD A GOOD RUN...THIS TIME...
HEY! UNION JACK!
I'M SORRY, KID, I HAVEN'T REALLY GOT TIME FOR GAMES RIGHT NOW...
OH, I DON'T THINK WE'RE PLAYING GAMES ANYMORE, JOEY BOY.
THAT'S ALL RIGHT...

...NEITHER ARE WE!

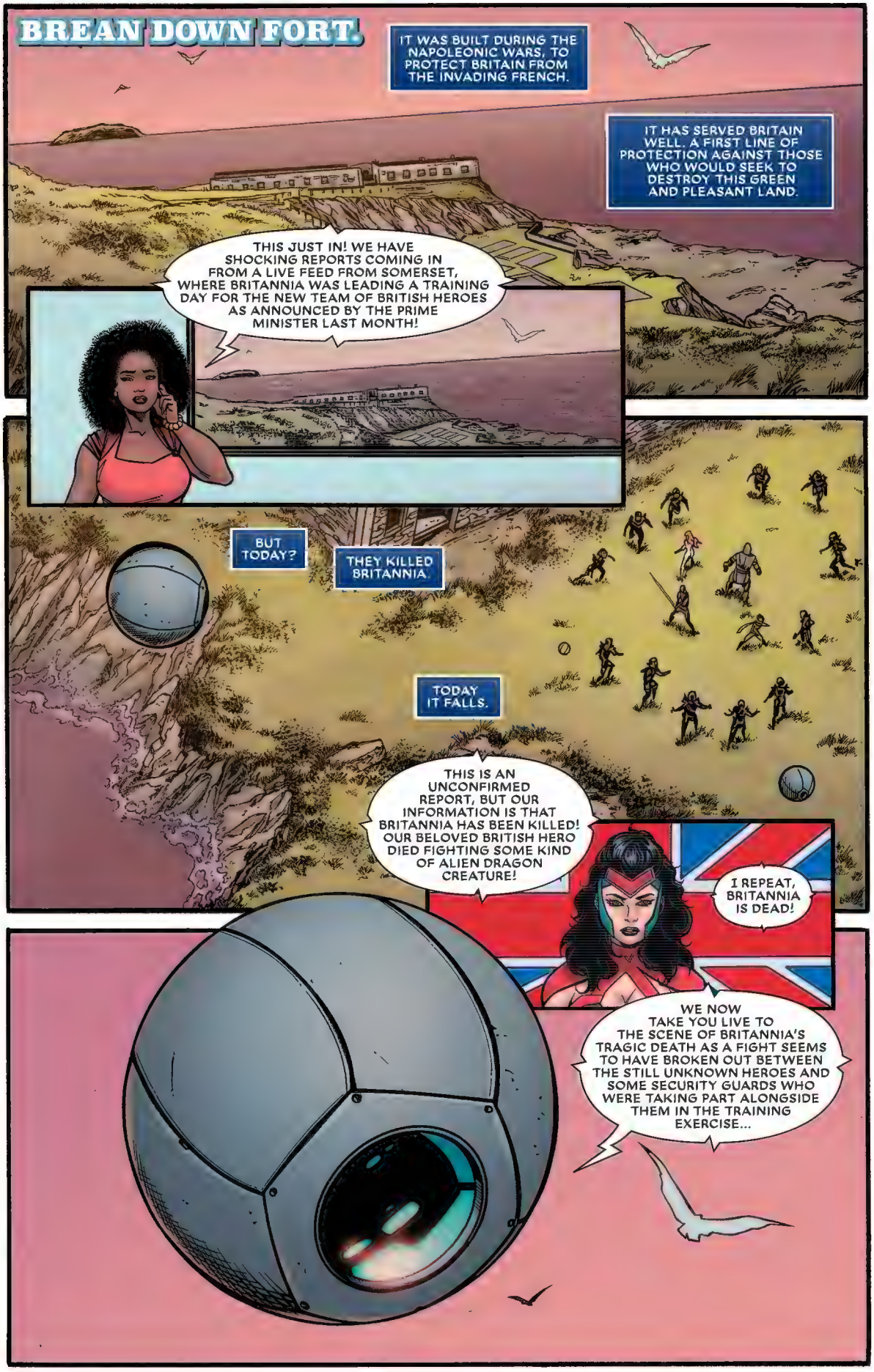
THE UNION #2

THE BRITANNIA PROJECT PART TWO: MAKING WAVES

CARDIFF, WALES.
TEN MONTHS AGO
CHOPP CHOPP CHOPP CHOPP CHOPP
WE HAVE SKREEM IN SIGHT!
TRACKING HER HEADING WEST TOWARD THE BAY!
THIS IS THE POLICE!! WE HAVE THIS AREA SURROUNDED!!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY, GIRL! NOT THIS TIME!
DAMMIT! LOST HER!
POLICE! DON'T MOVE!!

DON'T TRY ANYTHING, GIRL. THERE ARE ARMED POLICE OFFICERS ALL OVER THIS AREA. YOU WON'T GET AWAY.
WE ARE AUTHORISED TO USE WEAPONS...
...IF YOU--
WHAK
--ACK!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. HE'LL WAKE UP IN THE MORNING, AND HE'LL BE FINE.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT D'YOU WANT WITH ME?
GO AWAY!
AND WHAT? LET YOU CARRY ON RUNNING? HE WAS RIGHT, YOU KNOW. YOU WON'T GET AWAY. YOU'LL BE RUNNING FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
I CAN HELP YOU.
PLEASE. LET ME *HELP* YOU.
I'M *BRITANNIA*.

NOW
BRITANNIA.
SHE'S ALL THAT IS GREAT ABOUT BRITAIN.
ALL THAT IS GOOD. ALL THAT IS KIND.
ALL THAT IS JUST AND FAIR.
AT LEAST SHE *WAS*.
...AT THE HASTILY ASSEMBLED PRESS CONFERENCE, THE PRIME MINISTER ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A BRAND-NEW SUPER HERO TEAM, MADE UP OF HEROES FROM ALL FOUR NATIONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.
THIS WOULD ENSURE THAT GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND WILL BE READY TO FACE ANY HOSTILE THREATS NOW THAT WE ARE NO LONGER PART OF S.H.E.D.*
ALTHOUGH NO FURTHER DETAILS OF THE TEAM HAVE BEEN REVEALED, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE LEADER OF THIS NEW GROUP WILL BE THE LEGENDARY SUPER HERO BRITANNIA.
*S.H.E.D.: SUPER HERO EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE.

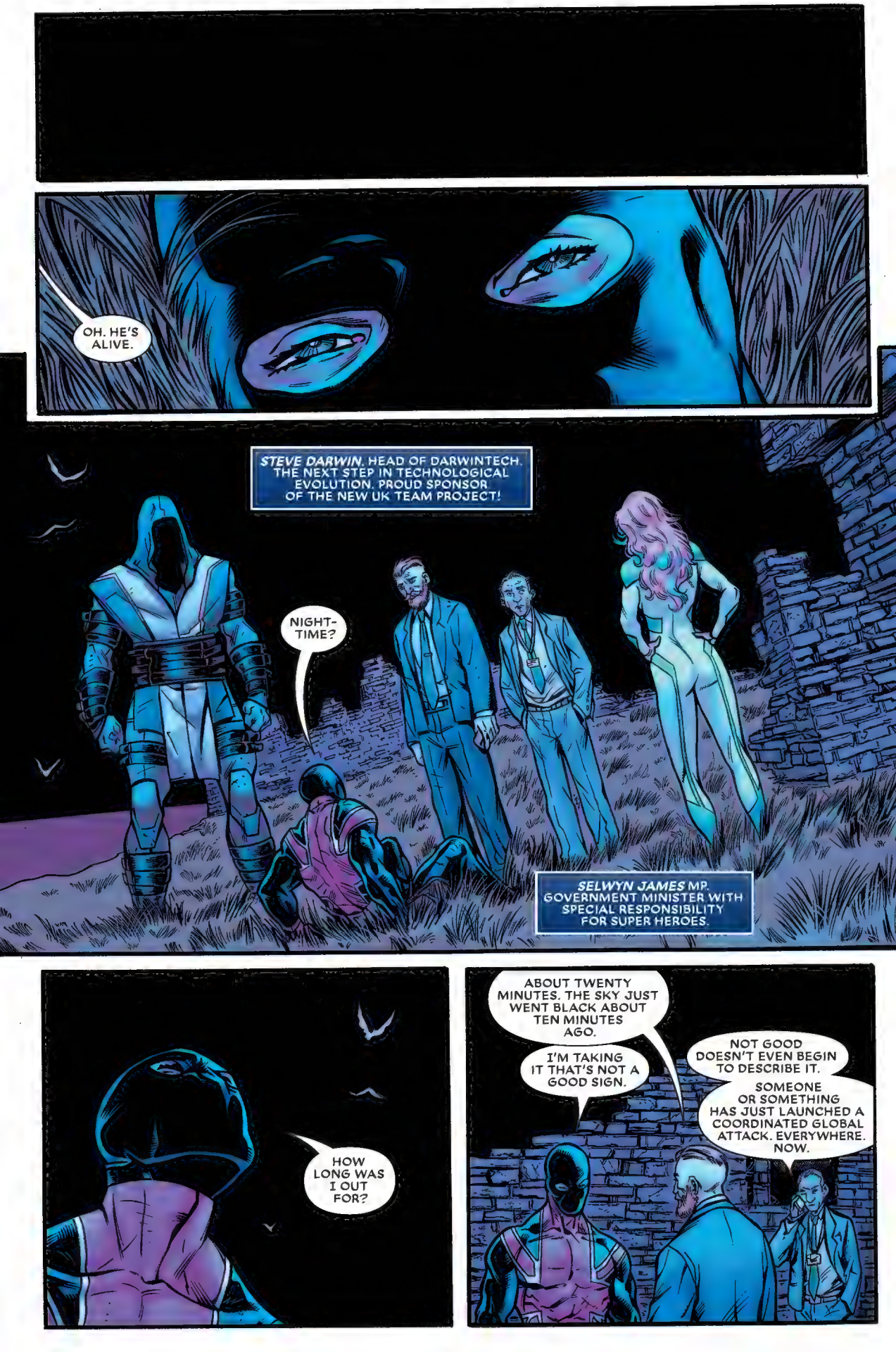

BREAN DOWN FORT.
IT WAS BUILT DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS, TO PROTECT BRITAIN FROM THE INVADING FRENCH.
IT HAS SERVED BRITAIN WELL. A FIRST LINE OF PROTECTION AGAINST THOSE WHO WOULD SEEK TO DESTROY THIS GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND.
THIS JUST IN! WE HAVE SHOCKING REPORTS COMING IN FROM A LIVE FEED FROM SOMERSET, WHERE BRITANNIA WAS LEADING A TRAINING DAY FOR THE NEW TEAM OF BRITISH HEROES AS ANNOUNCED BY THE PRIME MINISTER LAST MONTH!
BUT TODAY?
THEY KILLED BRITANNIA.
TODAY IT FALLS.
THIS IS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT, BUT OUR INFORMATION IS THAT BRITANNIA HAS BEEN KILLED! OUR BELOVED BRITISH HERO DIED FIGHTING SOME KIND OF ALIEN DRAGON CREATURE!
I REPEAT, BRITANNIA IS DEAD!
WE NOW TAKE YOU LIVE TO THE SCENE OF BRITANNIA'S TRAGIC DEATH AS A FIGHT SEEMS TO HAVE BROKEN OUT BETWEEN THE STILL UNKNOWN HEROES AND SOME SECURITY GUARDS WHO WERE TAKING PART ALONGSIDE THEM IN THE TRAINING EXERCISE...

HURMM?
HEY, WAIT, YOU LET GO OF THE CAMERA! THIS IS INFRINGEMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS!!
OH, SHUT UP!
SKRUNCH
BZZZT
LET THEM COME TO YOU. JUST DEFENSIVE, IF POSSIBLE. REMEMBER THEY'RE JUST PEOPLE UNDER ALL THAT GUNK.

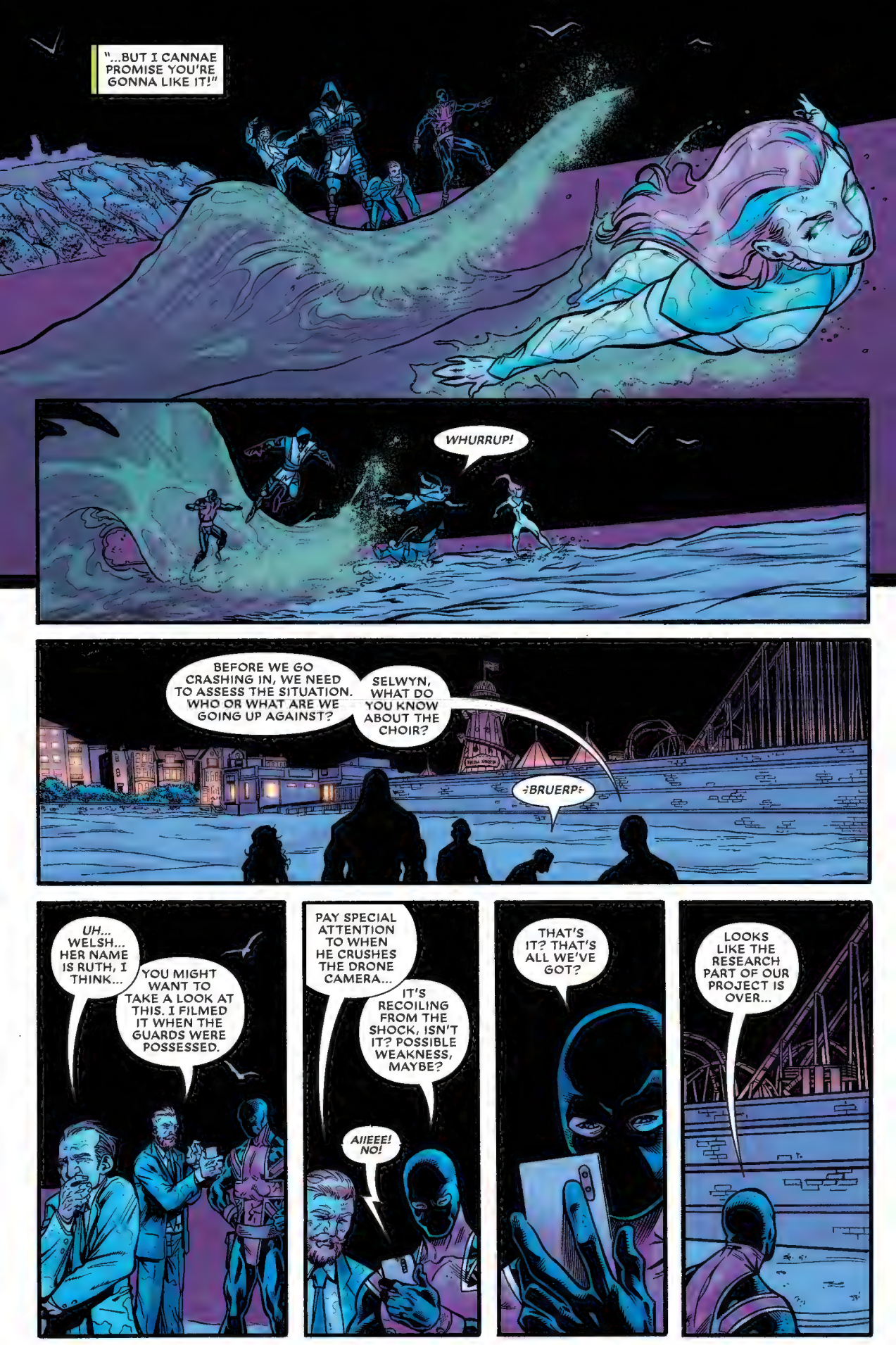
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. THEY WERE NEVER PEOPLE I LIKED.
KELPIE! AN ANCIENT WATER DEMON FOUND LIVING IN A SCOTTISH LAKE!
C'MON, GUYS! JUST A LITTLE WATER!
UNION JACK! JOE CHAPMAN. THE THIRD INCARNATION OF THIS GREAT BRITISH HERO!
TRY NOT TO HURT 'EM!
SNAKES! THIS MAN OF MYSTERY FROM NORTHERN IRELAND HAS THE STRENGTH OF TEN MEN!
SNAKES WILL BE GENTLE!
SNAKES WILL NOT CRUSH THEIR HEADS BENEATH HIS FEET!

THE CHOIR! THE WELSH SONGBIRD WITH A VOICE THAT CAN SHATTER STONE!
NO! I CAN'T DO THIS...
SNAKES WILL USE THEIR FEET TO CRUSH HEADS!
THE GIRL! GRAB HER!!
UGH!
YOU CAN'T RUN FROM US, GIRL!
NO...
NO!
DON'T PUSH ME AWAY!
I AM KNULL...
EMBRACE ME...
LET ME PROTECT YOU!

NO!!!
WHAT? WHAT HAPPENED?
EVERYONE OKAY?
CHOIR? WAS THAT YOU? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
GNUGH!
NEVER BETTER.

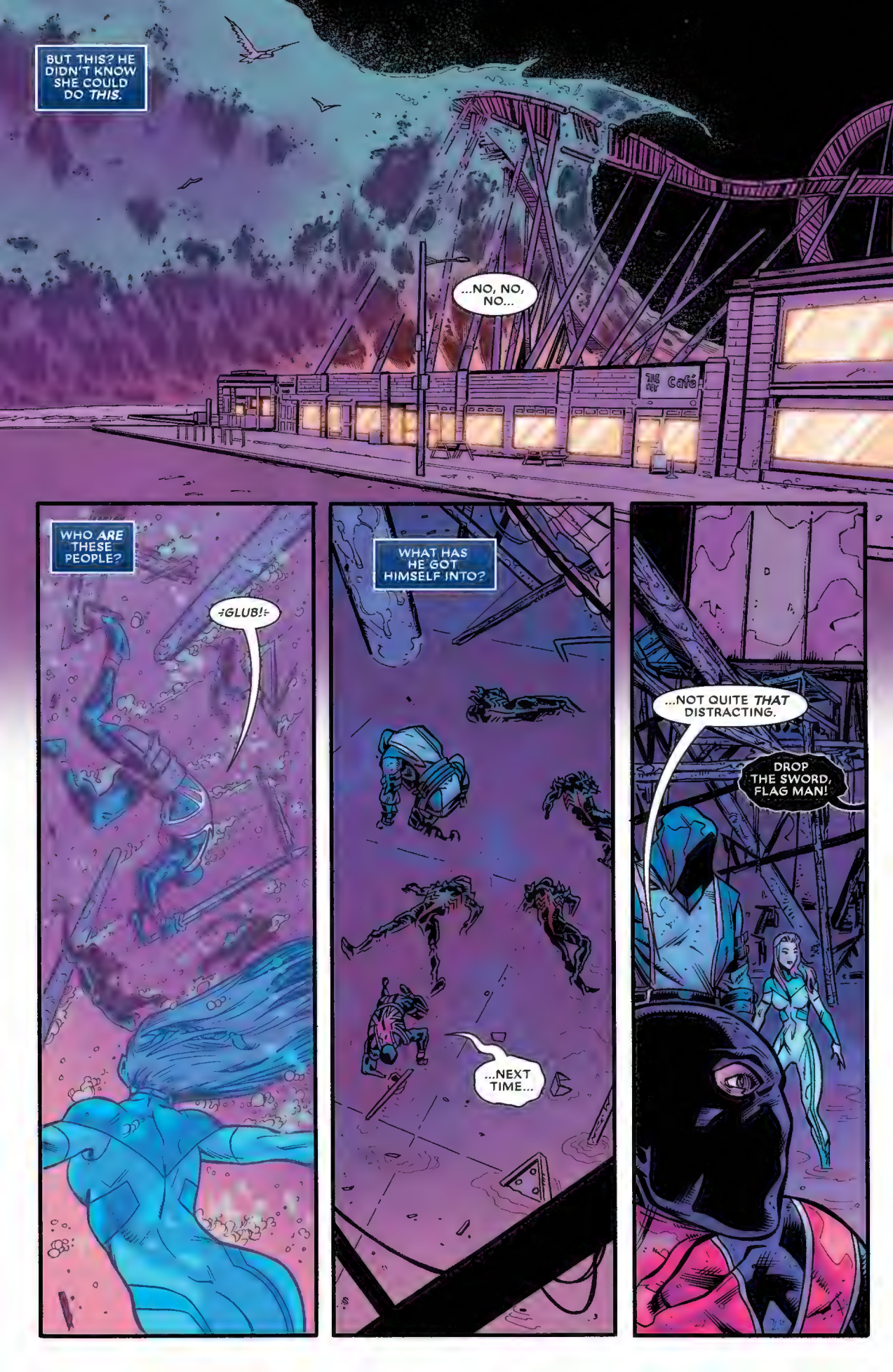

OH. HE'S ALIVE.
STEVE DARWIN. HEAD OF DARWINTECH. THE NEXT STEP IN TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION. PROUD SPONSOR OF THE NEW UK TEAM PROJECT!
NIGHT-TIME?
SELWYN JAMES MP. GOVERNMENT MINISTER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPER HEROES.
HOW LONG WAS I OUT FOR?
ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES. THE SKY JUST WENT BLACK ABOUT TEN MINUTES AGO.
I'M TAKING IT THAT'S NOT A GOOD SIGN.
NOT GOOD DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO DESCRIBE IT.
SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HAS JUST LAUNCHED A COORDINATED GLOBAL ATTACK. EVERYWHERE. NOW.

ALL MAJOR CITIES ARE UNDER ATTACK. LONDON. GLASGOW. NEW YORK IS A COMPLETE DISASTER ZONE. EVER HEARD OF *VENOM?*
SOME KIND OF OIL... BONDS TO PEOPLE... MAKES THEM UNSTOPPABLE. AND IT'S TARGETING SUPER HEROES...
THAT EXPLAINS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GUARDS. AND THE CHOIR.
THEY TRIED TO TAKE ME AN' THE BIG YIN TOO.
I GUESS OUR UNUSUAL BIOLOGY MEANT IT WASNNAE SO EASY FOR THEM TO POSSESS US.
WAIT. WAIT. I WAS KNOCKED OUT-- WHY DIDN'T THEY TRY TO TAKE ME?
WE DON'T REALLY KNOW...
BECAUSE YOU'RE A BIT USELESS.
÷KOFF÷ WELL. I GUESS THEY'LL PROBABLY HAVE HEADED FOR THE NEAREST HEAVILY POPULATED AREA.
WHICH, IN THIS CASE, WOULD BE WESTON-SUPER-MARE, JUST ALONG THE COAST FROM HERE.
RIGHT. SO THEY'VE GOT HALF AN HOUR START ON US AND PROBABLY TAKEN ALL THE AVAILABLE TRANSPORT. SO HOW DO WE GET THERE? ANYONE BRING JET PACKS?
OH, I CAN GET YOU THERE...


"...BUT I CANNAE PROMISE YOU'RE GONNA LIKE IT!"
WHURRUP!
BEFORE WE GO CRASHING IN, WE NEED TO ASSESS THE SITUATION. WHO OR WHAT ARE WE GOING UP AGAINST?
SELWYN, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CHOIR?
-BRUERP-
UH... WELSH... HER NAME IS RUTH, I THINK...
YOU MIGHT WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS. I FILMED IT WHEN THE GUARDS WERE POSSESSED.
PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO WHEN HE CRUSHES THE DRONE CAMERA...
IT'S RECOILING FROM THE SHOCK, ISN'T IT? POSSIBLE WEAKNESS, MAYBE?
AIIEEE! NO!
THAT'S IT? THAT'S ALL WE'VE GOT?
LOOKS LIKE THE RESEARCH PART OF OUR PROJECT IS OVER...

...NOW WE DO THE PRACTICAL!
IT'S OVER!
GIVE IT UP NOW, AND NOBODY GETS HURT!
HELTER SKELT
OH, LOOK, DADDY'S HOME.
BUT THAT'S NO REASON TO STOP THE PARTY!

UNION JACK DOESN'T KNOW THESE PEOPLE.
SNAKES. KELPIE. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE OR WHAT THEY CAN DO.
THEY'RE TOO FAST-- TOO CLOSE...
HE'S ABOUT TO FIND OUT.
WE NEED SOME KIND OF DISTRACTION...
I THOUGHT Y'D NEVER ASK!
KELPIE IS SOME KIND OF WATER DEMON.
HE'S PICKED THAT UP.
RAIN?
NO, NOT RAIN...
OH NO...


BUT THIS? HE DIDN'T KNOW SHE COULD DO *THIS*.
...NO, NO, NO...
WHO *ARE* THESE PEOPLE?
÷GLUB!÷
WHAT HAS HE GOT HIMSELF INTO?
...NEXT TIME...
...NOT QUITE *THAT* DISTRACTING.
DROP THE SWORD, FLAG MAN!

OR MY LITTLE FRIEND HERE GETS A SONIC BOOM RIGHT INSIDE HIS HEAD.
WAAAH!
DON'T DO THIS, RUTH.
I AM RUTH. I AM KNULL. YOU DON'T KNOW US!
THIS ISN'T YOU...
YOU THINK THIS IS SOME EVIL VERSION OF ME? I'VE BEEN TURNED BAD? I'M DARK CHOIR NOW?
YOU NEED TO REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE.
WE'RE EXACTLY WHO WE ALWAYS WERE, BUT WE'VE NEVER FELT SO GOOD...SO STRONG, SO POWERFUL BEFORE...
...NOT LIKE THIS!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?
TRYING TO SAVE THE DAY.

BUT, WITH ALL THIS WATER ROUND, IF YOU ELECTRIFY THE SWORD, WON'T THAT LIKELY FRY YOU IF YOU TRY TO USE IT?
QUITE POSSIBLY, BUT I'M NOT THE ONE WHO'S GOING TO USE IT!
BUT WHAT ABOUT BRITANNIA? WHAT DID SHE WANT?
OH, SHUT UP. YOU DON'T KNOW NOTHING ABOUT WHAT BRITANNIA WANTED.
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS? WHY DID SHE CHOOSE NOW TO SET UP A TEAM? DO YOU KNOW THAT?
DID YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT IT?
SHE DID IT TO PROTECT US. TO PROTECT HER. HAVE YOU SEEN THE STATE OF THIS COUNTRY?
BAD THINGS ARE COMING, MISTER FLAG. SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO BE BAD RIGHT BACK.
KNULL KNOWS!
HEY! JACK!
CATCH!
DO IT!
CHUGGA CHUGGA CHUGGA

BUZZZT!
AAIIIEEEE!!!
NO!
KNULL!
DON'T...
...LEAVE ME...
"THE NATION MOURNS THE LOSS OF OUR MOST BELOVED HERO, BRITANNIA, THIS MORNING..."

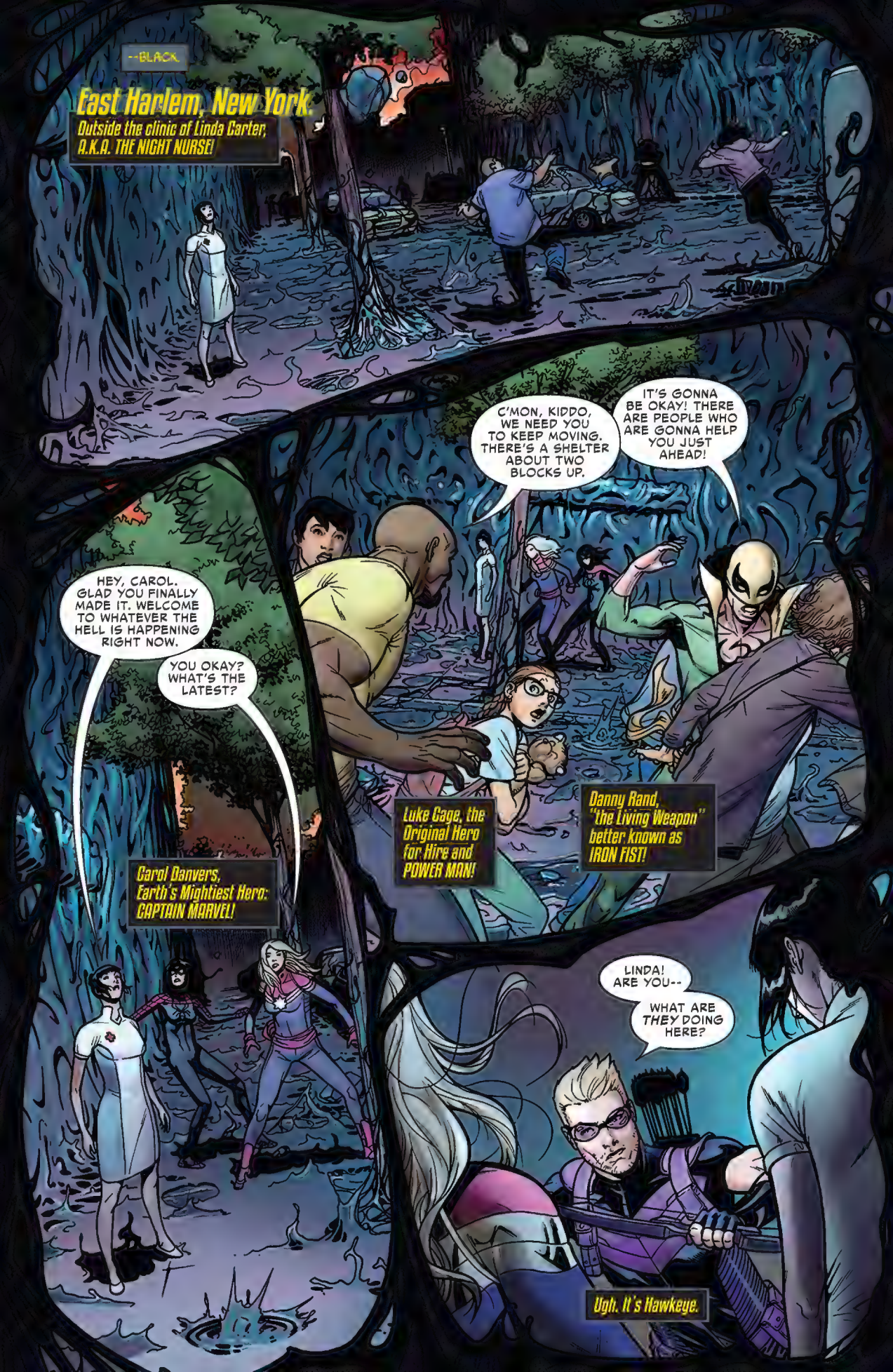
...WHEN VIEWERS OF *GOOD MORNING UK* SAW HER TRAGIC DEATH. SHE WAS CUT DOWN WHILST PROTECTING THE BRITISH ISLES FROM THE SPEARHEAD OF AN ALIEN INVASION.
NUMBER 10 IS EXPECTED TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT WITHIN THE HOUR.
JOE CHAPMAN LOOKS AT THE SKY. IT'S STILL BLACK.
HE'S BEEN AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW IT'S NOT OVER.
BUT THEY'VE DONE THEIR BIT. NOW IT'S UP TO OTHER PEOPLE TO DO THEIRS.
WE JUST CAME TO TELL YOU WE'RE LEAVING.
OH, RIGHT. OKAY. LOOK, I KNOW IT'S BEEN A BIT OF A CRAZY DAY, BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW I THINK YOU ALL ACQUITTED YOURSELVES VERY WELL, AND I'M SURE YOU'LL BE A TEAM THAT BRITANNIA WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, MATE. WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT GOING HOME.
WE ARE LEAVING.
IT'S THE WHOLE TEAM THING. THAT'S WHAT WE'RE LEAVING.

WHAT ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN? BRITAIN NEEDS--
WHAT? WHAT DOES BRITAIN NEED? HEROES? YOU REALLY HAVE JUST STEPPED OUT OF 1944, HAVEN'T YOU?
WE WERE NEVER DOING THIS FOR QUEEN AND COUNTRY. WE WERE DOING THIS FOR BRITANNIA.
SHE WAS SOMETHING BIGGER. SOMETHING BETTER.
SHE WAS SOMETHING BETTER THAN YOU'LL EVER BE. YOU CALL YOURSELF UNION JACK? YOU DON'T REPRESENT US. DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHERE MERTHYR TYDFIL IS?
THE TEAM WAS BRITANNIA'S DREAM. BUT SHE'S DEAD NOW.
WE'RE DONE.
THIS WAS JUST SUPPOSED TO BE A FUN DAY AT THE SEASIDE. RUN THE TEAM THROUGH THEIR PACES. INTERVIEW ON THE TELLY, THEN FISH AND CHIPS FOR TEA.
NOW I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF BRITAIN'S MOST BELOVED SUPER HERO AS WELL AS THE DESTRUCTION OF TWO SOMERSET TOURIST ATTRACTIONS.

HATE TO KICK A MAN WHEN HE'S DOWN, SELWYN, BUT THE TEAM JUST WALKED OUT. THEY'RE NOT PLAYING YOUR GAME ANYMORE.
AND, TO BE FAIR, I THINK THEY MADE SOME VALID POINTS.
HA! THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM. THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM!
YOU SIGNED A CONTRACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT, MR. CHAPMAN.
AND IT CLEARLY STATED THAT IF ANYTHING WAS TO HAPPEN TO BRITANNIA, THEN YOU, JOE CHAPMAN, WOULD STAND IN AS TEAM LEADER UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT COULD BE FOUND.
OH NO, THIS IS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME, MATE!
LOOK, "MATE," YOU EITHER HAVE THAT TEAM READY FOR A FULL PUBLIC PRESENTATION AT THE END OF THE MONTH...
...OR I WILL PERSONALLY LOCK YOU UP IN THE TOWER OF LONDON FOR THE REST OF YOUR MISERABLE EXISTENCE!
AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM NUMBER 10 DOWNING STREET.
BRITANNIA WAS THE BEST OF US. SHE WANTED TO BRING US TOGETHER, AND SHE HAS DONE THAT. HER SAD PASSING HAS UNITED US IN OUR GRIEF. UNITED US IN OUR MOURNING.
AND I AM PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE TEAM SHE HELPED ESTABLISH WILL GO ON, WITH ITS NEW LEADER, UNION JACK. I'M SURE WE WILL GET BEHIND HIM AND GIVE HIM ALL THE SUPPORT HE NEEDS.
LET'S DO IT FOR BRITAIN! LET'S DO IT FOR BRITANNIA!

SPIDER-WOMAN #7

MY NAME IS JESSICA DREW. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE.
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE FINDING A CURE FOR MY POISONED BLOOD. NOT JUST MINE—MY NIECE AND POSSIBLY MY SON ARE ALSO CURSED WITH MY FATHER'S LEGACY OF PAIN AND MY MOTHER'S MADNESS.
RIGHT NOW THE ONLY THINGS KEEPING ME ALIVE ARE A FEW SYRINGES FILLED WITH A "CURE" WORSE THAN THE DISEASE. THE MARCHAND SERUM MAKES ME STRONGER. BUT IT MAKES ME RECKLESS. CARELESS.
UNCARING.
BUT I GUESS IT'S SELFISH TO WORRY ABOUT THAT WHEN THE WORLD JUST WENT—


--BLACK.
East Harlem, New York.
Outside the clinic of Linda Carter, A.K.A. THE NIGHT NURSE!
C'MON, KIDDO, WE NEED YOU TO KEEP MOVING. THERE'S A SHELTER ABOUT TWO BLOCKS UP.
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY! THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE GONNA HELP YOU JUST AHEAD!
HEY, CAROL. GLAD YOU FINALLY MADE IT. WELCOME TO WHATEVER THE HELL IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.
YOU OKAY? WHAT'S THE LATEST?
Luke Cage, the Original Hero for Hire and POWER MAN!
Danny Rand, "the Living Weapon" better known as IRON FIST!
Carol Danvers, Earth's Mightiest Hero: CAPTAIN MARVEL!
LINDA! ARE YOU--
WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE?
Ugh. It's Hawkeye.

WE LIVE HERE. WHY ARE YOU HERE, DUDE?
...JUST WOULD HAVE BEEN A LOT COOLER IF YOU'D TOLD ME YOU WERE CALLING OTHER PEOPLE FOR HELP.
CLINT, MY CLINIC IS COVERED IN SYMBIOTE SLUDGE, EVERYONE'S SCREAMING IN TERROR, AND YOU REALLY WANT TO DO THIS NOW?
NO, SERIOUSLY, WHY IS CLINT HERE?
THIS ISN'T THE BEST TIME TO GET PICKY ABOUT WORKING WITH EXES, AND YOU'VE BEEN FINE WITH IT BEFORE, JESS, C'MON.
WAIT... JESS??? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
TONY AND I RAN MORE TESTS ON THAT MARCHAND SERUM, AND IT'S--
BECAUSE I NEED YOU TO HELP ME STOP THAT!!!
YEAH, YEAH, IT'S MAKING ME AN @#%&@#, PROBABLY KILLING ME, WHATEVER. I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE EITHER, BUT CAROL INSISTED I--
WELL, I MEAN... LINDA AND I--
NOT THE TIME, CLINT.

SKREEEAAW!
OHHH @#&.
LET'S GET THAT--
NO! IT'S A SYMBIOTE! IF IT GETS AHOLD OF YOU...YOU'RE GONE.

HOW MANY OF THESE THINGS ARE THERE???
WE DON'T KNOW YET. A LOT.
WELL, I'D APPRECIATE YOU PREVENTING *THIS* ONE FROM DESTROYING MY NEIGHBORHOOD.
UNNF NOTHING SEEMS TO BE HURTING IT MUCH. NOT EVEN CLINT'S TOOTHPICKS.
I HEARD THAT!
I KNOW!
SHREEK!
I DON'T THINK IT LIKES THE LIGHT!
KYAAAAAAAA--
BZZZT
HELL YEAH! GOOD SHOT, DREW!
THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT? ENERGY ATTACKS? THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT HURTS IT?
WE THINK SO, YES.
...THEN WHY AREN'T *YOU* ATTACKING IT, CAROL?

I KNOW YOU THINK I'M INVINCIBLE--
I DON'T THINK THAT.
--BUT THIS IS A FRACTION OF WHAT I NEED TO FIGHT TODAY. SO YES. I HAVE ORDERS TO HOLD BACK. SUPPORT ONLY. BUT I WON'T LET IT HURT YOU!
I HAVE FOUGHT A DRAGON BEFORE, Y'KNOW. JUST SAYING.
WE KNOW, DANNY.
FINE, FISTY. LET'S GO, TEAM ZAPPIES.
NRRRAAHHHH!
BRRZZT
THIS IS BARELY FAZING IT. I NEED MORE POWER. LINDA! YOU STILL HAVE ANY MARCHAND SERUM?
IF THE WORLD WASN'T ON FIRE, I WOULD NOT LET YOU, AGH... YOU SHOULDN'T BE DOING THIS. IT'S NOT RELIABLE, AND--
OH, I ASSURE YOU, I'M @#$%@# AWARE.
JESSICA! NO!!! DON'T DO THIS! I CAN--
IT'S--IT'S-- IT'S OHHHKAY, CAROOOL. I HAVE TO--
AHAHHAAAAA!

LUKE. HOW'S YOUR FASTBALL SPECIAL?
S'ALL RIGHT.
WHOOPH
GET OFF MY PLANET, &%$#%&#!
SHRREEE!
SHLRRRGH
I'M. NOT. SUPPOSED TO BE HERE!
BAAAADDDD TASTES BAAAAD
POISONNNN
CANNOT ASSIMILATE
DEPARRRRT
FLEEEEEE

I'M ALREADY DYING, YOU KNOW. AND THE AMOUNT OF SERUM I TOOK PROBABLY JUST CUT THE TIME I HAD LEFT IN HALF.

MAYBE MORE.

GREEEAHH!

NOT SURE IT'S WORTH IT, HONESTLY. IF ANYTHING'S WORTH IT. BUT YOU WILL GET TO LEARN ONE THING DURING YOUR BRIEF TIME ON EARTH--

THESE ARE CALLED VENOM BLASTS FOR A REASON, YOU BASTARD!

KRRZZZTT

KYAAAAGH!!!

NYEAHHHH!
SKRAASHHH
...
OOMPH
OOMPH
DO. YOU. KNOW--
--WHAT YOUR STUPID SPACE GOO COST ME???
IZZTNCH
UH... SHOULD WE STOP HER? WE SHOULD STOP HER, RIGHT?
I'M THINKING THIS IS MORE OF A CAROL JOB.
SLRRRSH
SHLLRRRPP
GRAAAHH!!!

JESS!
ARE YOU HAPPY? DOES THE GOOD CAPTAIN HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO GO SAVE THE WORLD NOW?
JESS, THAT'S NOT FAIR.
YOU DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT FAIR.
THAT'S EVEN LESS FAIR, YOU--
AGH!!!
DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH ME RIGHT NOW!
CRAAAKK

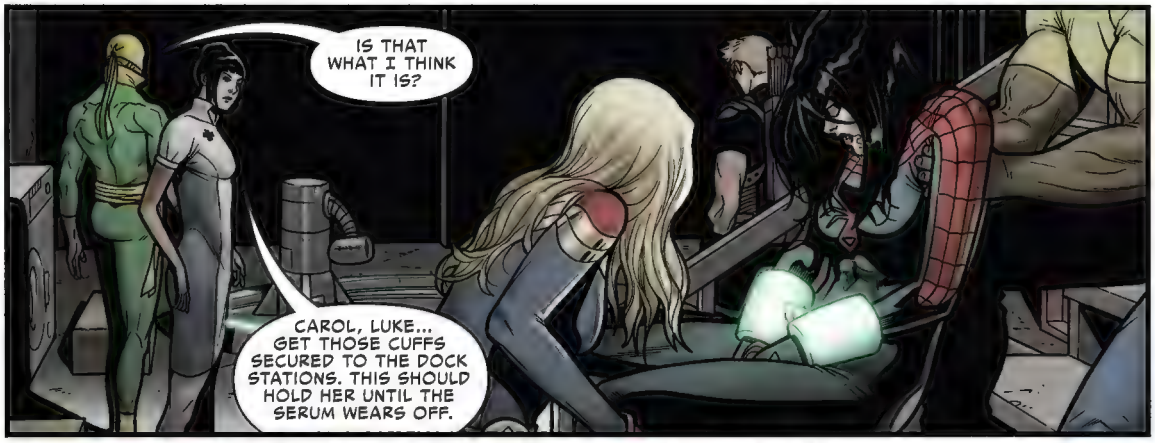
THIS ISN'T YOU TALKING. IT'S THAT DAMN SERUM. IT MESSES WITH YOUR BRAIN, YOUR EMOTIONS--
AND THE AMOUNT I HAD TO TAKE TO CLEAN UP *YOUR* MESS COST ME *MONTHS* OF MY LIFE I CAN'T GET BACK.
JESS, THIS CRAP IS KILLING YOU!
-NNF- I'M *ALREADY DYING*, DAMMIT.
THIS "CRAP" KEEPS ME ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FIND OUT WHAT THE DAMN HIGH EVOLUTIONARY DID TO MY MOTHER.
-WHOOF-
CRRRK
LONG ENOUGH TO FIND A CURE. A CURE FOR ME. FOR REBECCA.
SMASH
OOOF!
FOR GERRY!!!
YOU HAVE ANY TRANQS STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE HER DOWN?
IN THE STATE SHE'S IN NOW? NOOOOPE.

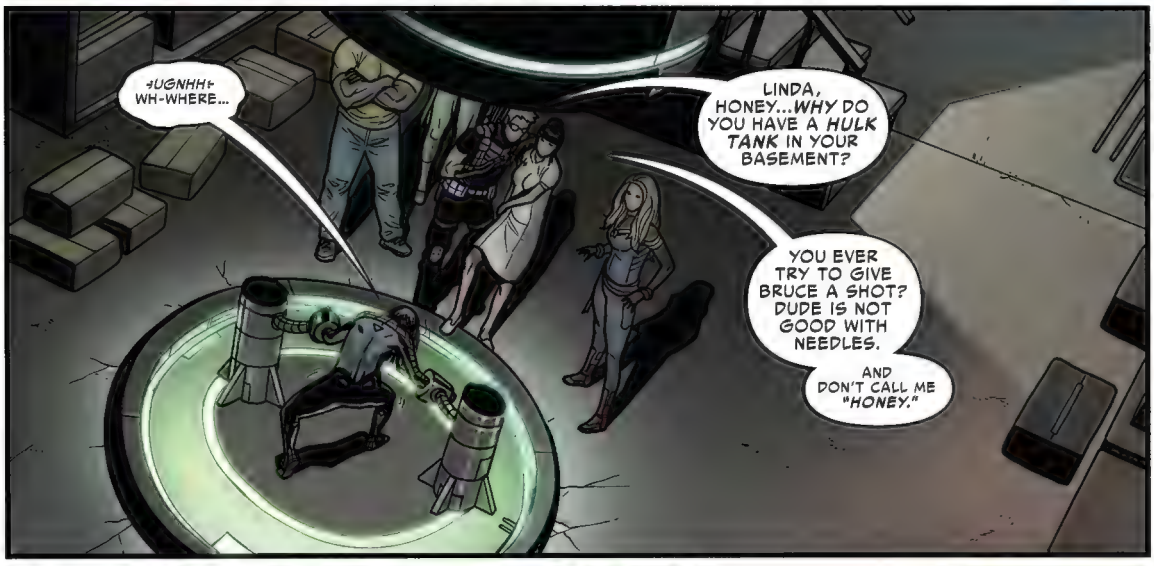
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE, JESS! I TOLD YOU--
+UFF+ I WAS SO CLOSE TO FINDING ANSWERS, CAROL! BUT YOU DIDN'T CARE. YOU DRAGGED ME HERE TO BE A DISPOSABLE BUG ZAPPER YOU CAN SACRIFICE FOR YOUR REAL FRIENDS.
KRAK
THAT'S. NOT. TRUE. AH!
I TRIED TO HELP YOU! I TOOK YOU TO +OOF+ FRIKKIN' SPACE!
IT WASN'T ENOUGH, CAROL.
I WASN'T ENOUGH.

I HAVE PUT UP WITH SO MUCH OF YOUR ANGER. YOUR FEAR. YOUR LASHING OUT. YOU DON'T DEAL WITH IT, SO I HAVE TO!
DO YOU WANT THE FULL FORCE OF MY STRENGTH, JESS? WILL THAT FINALLY MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE WORTHY?
OH YEAH, I'VE JUST BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO FINALLY KICK MY ASS TO HEAL MY DADDY ISSUES, THANKS, BESTIE!
AGH!
WHAM
JESS!
I WAS JUST WAITING FOR YOU TO BE DISTRACTED.
DANNY? REALLY? YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME DOWN?
LIKE I SAID. I'VE FOUGHT DRAGONS BEFORE.

I'M NOT AS POWERFUL AS CAROL, SURE. BUT UNLIKE CAROL, I'M NOT YOUR BEST FRIEND.
AND I'M NOT AFRAID TO HURT YOU.
TZZZZT
HA. THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU SHOULD BE AFRAID OF.
TZZT
KRAK
BLU
WHOOF
NNF!
TZZRRRT
NOT BAD, FISTY. BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

IS THIS ENOUGH, JESSICA???
CRRRACK
WE NEED TO SECURE HER UNTIL THE SERUM WEARS OFF.
WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE? WHAT ARE THOSE?
STEPHEN LEFT THEM HERE.
OH, DID HE, NOW?
NNF. SHUT UP, CLINT.
C'MON, HAM SAMMY. ONCE WE GET THAT POISON OUT OF YOU, WE CAN--
≠CRAACKLE≠ DANVERS? WHERE THE HELL ARE YOU? YOU DONE SHOPPING UPTOWN OR WHATEVER? WE NEED YOU-- NOW!
AH... #$%@
SSSSZZZLE
I...I HAVE TO GO, LINDA. BUT I CAN'T--
JUST GET HER INTO THE BASEMENT. SHE'LL BE SAFE THERE. I THINK.


IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
CAROL, LUKE... GET THOSE CUFFS SECURED TO THE DOCK STATIONS. THIS SHOULD HOLD HER UNTIL THE SERUM WEARS OFF.


UGNHH WH-WHERE...
LINDA, HONEY...*WHY* DO YOU HAVE A *HULK TANK* IN YOUR BASEMENT?
YOU EVER TRY TO GIVE BRUCE A SHOT? DUDE IS NOT GOOD WITH NEEDLES.
AND DON'T CALL ME *"HONEY."*

LINDA... CAROL...WHAT ARE YOU-- *NO!*
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION UNTIL WE CAN DEAL WITH THIS, JESS.
NO!!!

NO! YOU ARE NOT LEAVING ME HERE! DO YOU KNOW HOW BAD IT SMELLS IN THESE THINGS???
JESS, I'M SORRY.

OKAY, I GET IT. GOT A LITTLE OUT OF HAND THERE. HAHA, TOTES APOLOGIZE. BUT, LINDA, I'M GOING TO NEED ANOTHER DOSE OF THAT SERUM, UH... NOW.
NO.
CAROL! PLEASE! IT HURTS!
RYAAHHH!!!
CAN THIS THING ACTUALLY HOLD HER?
I'M... NOT SURE. IN HINDSIGHT, I SHOULD HAVE WONDERED WHY IT WAS SO CHEAP.
...AND WHY TONY STARK WAS HAVING A GARAGE SALE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
CAROL!!!! GIVE ME THE SERUM!
YOU DON'T NEED IT, JESS! I'LL COME BACK AND WE'LL FIND SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T DO THIS TO YOU. THAT DOESN'T DESTROY YOU LIKE IT DID YOUR MOTHER ON WUNDAGORE!
KRSHH
THAT ABOMINATION WASN'T MY MOTHER!
CRRRNCH

I REMEMBER WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU COULDN'T BE AROUND THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE. THAT IT WASN'T SAFE.
YOU WERE RIGHT, JESS.
...JESS.
HFF! HFF! OHHHHH, CAROL. YOU KNOW THE ONE THING THAT MONSTROUS *REPLICA* OF MY MOTHER AND I HAD IN COMMON? *WE* HAD CHILDREN. *CHILDREN* WHO *LOVED* US. YOU'LL NEVER HAVE THAT, WILL YOU, *CAPTAIN* DANVERS?
THAT'S WHY YOU HATE ME.
CAROL! I HAVE TO GO FIND THE CURE! FOR GERRY, CAROL!!! CAROOOL!
GOTTA GO SAVE THE WORLD-- I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU WHEN I CAN.

LET. ME. OUTTTT!!!
SMASSSH
HUFFF H-HAVE TO... FIND...CURE. GERRY. REBECCA.
CRRACK
I BELIEVE I CAN ASSIST WITH THAT.
OCTAVIA. WHY...?
BECAUSE WE HAVE SO MUCH MORE IN COMMON THAN YOU THINK, MY DEAR.

THE UNION #1 VARIANT BY
CARLOS PACHECO, RAFAEL FONTERIZ
& NOLAN WOODARD

THE UNION #2 VARIANT BY
JOHN McCREA & MIKE SPICER

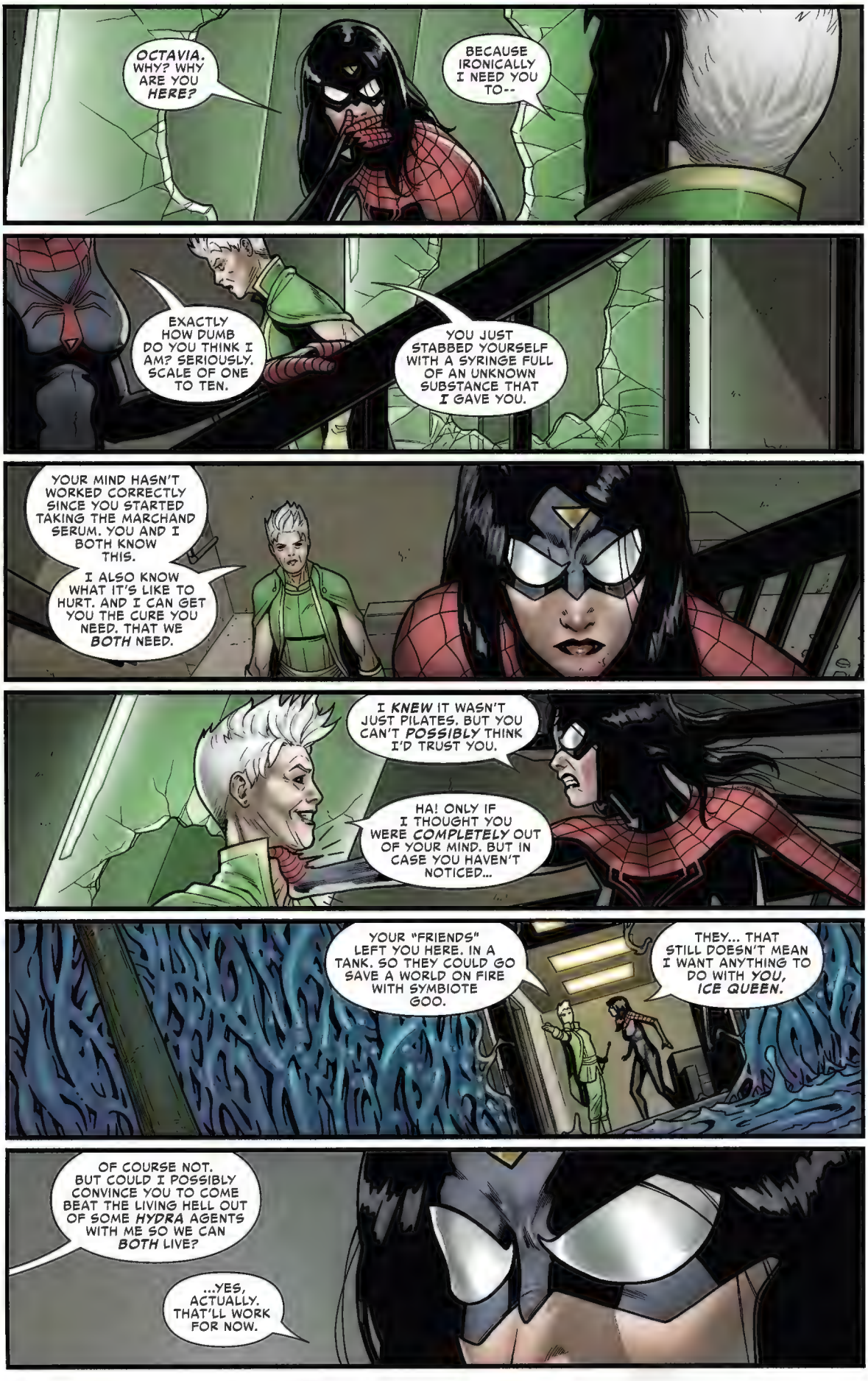
SPIDER-WOMAN #7 HIDDEN GEM VARIANT BY
GEORGE PÉREZ & FRANK D'ARMATA

SPIDER-WOMAN #8 VARIANT BY
DAVE JOHNSON

SPIDER-WOMAN #8

MY NAME IS...
I THINK MY NAME IS--
MY
NAME
WHY CAN'T I...
I KNOW I DON'T LIKE THIS #@$% THOUGH
I'LL REMEMBER MY NAME LATER. YES. THAT'S FINE.

UGH! YOU'RE--CAN YOU NOT ACT LIKE A CRAZED WOMBAT FOR ONCE, YOU RIDICULOUS--
I'M GOING TO--
YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE THIS UNLESS YOU WANT TO DIE!
AHHH!!!
I...I AM PRETTY SURE I HATE YOU.
WITH GOOD CAUSE. BUT I'M ALSO THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO WANTS YOU ALIVE RIGHT NOW.


OCTAVIA. WHY? WHY ARE YOU HERE?
BECAUSE IRONICALLY I NEED YOU TO--
EXACTLY HOW DUMB DO YOU THINK I AM? SERIOUSLY. SCALE OF ONE TO TEN.
YOU JUST STABBED YOURSELF WITH A SYRINGE FULL OF AN UNKNOWN SUBSTANCE THAT I GAVE YOU.
YOUR MIND HASN'T WORKED CORRECTLY SINCE YOU STARTED TAKING THE MARCHAND SERUM. YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THIS.
I ALSO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HURT. AND I CAN GET YOU THE CURE YOU NEED. THAT WE BOTH NEED.
I KNEW IT WASN'T JUST PILATES. BUT YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY THINK I'D TRUST YOU.
HA! ONLY IF I THOUGHT YOU WERE COMPLETELY OUT OF YOUR MIND. BUT IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED...
YOUR "FRIENDS" LEFT YOU HERE. IN A TANK. SO THEY COULD GO SAVE A WORLD ON FIRE WITH SYMBIOTE GOO.
THEY... THAT STILL DOESN'T MEAN I WANT ANYTHING TO DO WITH YOU, ICE QUEEN.
OF COURSE NOT. BUT COULD I POSSIBLY CONVINCE YOU TO COME BEAT THE LIVING HELL OUT OF SOME HYDRA AGENTS WITH ME SO WE CAN BOTH LIVE?
...YES, ACTUALLY. THAT'LL WORK FOR NOW.

Previously Unknown Hydra Facility, New York.
...SO AS YOU CAN SEE, I WASN'T LYING ABOUT NOT HAVING MORE SPIDERS. BUT THEY DO.
YOU'RE SERIOUSLY ASKING ME TO HELP YOU STEAL FROM HYDRA?
YOUR FATHER WASN'T THE ONLY ONE TO TURN HIS DAUGHTER OVER TO THEM. NOR THE ONLY ONE TO... EXPERIMENT.
AH. WELL, OFF WE GO, THEN.
HEH. SERIOUSLY, I KNEW IT WASN'T JUST PILATES.
SHUT UP AND STEAL THE SPIDERS.
SLAM

...AND PLEASE *TRY* NOT TO CRUSH ALL THE SPIDERS THIS TIME!
YOU'RE NOT MY MOM.
MMF. DEFINITELY NOT.
OH GOD, ARE YOU GONNA TURN OUT TO BE MY MOTHER?
NO! I AM, WITHOUT A DOUBT, *NOT YOUR MOTHER.*
...CLONE OF MY MOTHER?
PLEASE JUST +OOMF+ GET THE DAMN SPIDERS.

YOU'LL DIE FOR BETRAYING HYDRA, TRAITOR.
WHO, ME? OR HER?
I BELIEVE SHE MEANS ME.
I MEANT OCTAVIA! I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
HEY! I BETRAYED YOU GUYS TOO, Y'KNOW!
I'M SURE THEY'RE ALL VERY IMPRESSED.
ZZRCH
WELL, IF THEY WEREN'T BEFORE--
--THEY ARE NOW.
LATRODECTUS AETERNUM. YOU HAVE THEM--I'M TAKING THEM. NOW.

DID YOU GRAB THE KEYS OFF MISS "I HEART HYDRA" IN THERE? OR ARE YOU GOING TO DO THE ZAPPY THING TO START IT?
+SIGH+ I CANNOT DO THE "ZAPPY THING," JESSICA.
BUT YES, I HAVE THE KEYS.
HDR-8171
HDR-6181
Later.
SO NOW WHAT? ARE WE TAKING THESE BACK TO...A LAB OR A SECRET VOLCANO LAIR OR WHATEVER *BABA YAGA ICE QUEEN CASTLE* YOU LIVE IN?
CHARMING. AND NO. WE STILL NEED A FEW MORE THINGS OFF THE SHOPPING LIST.
SUCH AS?
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT DINOSAURS?
HDE-5167
...ARE YOU %#$@ KIDDING ME?

American Museum of Natural History, New York.
Sometimes hideout of Stegron.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY LET YOU OUT!
MM, YES. WHEN ALL THOSE SYMBIOTE MONSTERS STARTED SHOWING UP, THEY LET US OUT ON OUR OWN RECOGNIZANCE. NO ROOM AT RYKER'S APPARENTLY.
ALSO, I THINK A DRAGON ATE THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY.
YOU HAVE DOCTOR CONNORS' SAMPLES, THOUGH, YES? WORTH LOTS. COULD FIND A BUYER. OR BETTER YET... MAKE PEOPLE DINOSAURS?
HONESTLY? I'M--I'M TIRED, FRIEND. I THINK IT MIGHT BE TIME FOR ME TO JUST... GIVE ALL THIS UP.
GIVE IT UP, STEGRON!!!

OH FOR #@!% SAKE!
NOTHING PERSONAL, VINCENT.
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING, OCTAVIA! I JUST GOT OUT OF--
OH, I KNOW. BUT I NEED THOSE SAMPLES, OLD CHAP.
OOOOOF! YOUUUUUUU--
DREW! CATCH THAT!!!
NRRRAAAHH! WHY CAN'T ANY OF YOU LEAVE ME ALONE?!

PEOPLE REALLY NEED TO START PUTTING THEIR VALUABLE SCIENCE STUFF AND SPIDERS INTO THINGS NOT MADE OF GLASS!
HRK.
AVAGE LAND
OCTAVIAAAA, I WILL KILL YO--
HOW DOES EVERYONE KNOW YOU?
CRNCH
NETWORKING. -UFF- YOU SHOULD TRY IT.
WHOOSH
KRRRACK

OKAY, I ADMIT I'M STARTING TO FEEL KINDA BAD ABOUT THIS.
NNNGG...
MMPH. THEN YOU'RE *REALLY* NOT GOING TO LIKE OUR NEXT STOP.
Stark Safe House #B22, New York.
OKAY, HYDRA? YES. DINOSAURS? YES. BUT YOU THINK I'M GONNA STEAL FROM *TONY FRIKKIN' STARK?*
NOT THE FIRST TIME, I'VE HEARD. AT LEAST THIS ISN'T ANOTHER *SPACESHIP.*
JESSICA, WE COULD *TRY* TO REPLICATE THE EXTENSIVE RESEARCH YOUR FRIEND MR. STARK HAS ALREADY DONE ON YOUR BLOOD AND DNA... IT WOULD TAKE *YEARS.* TIME *NEITHER* OF US HAS, MY DEAR.
FINE. BUT--
VROOO
I'LL MEET YOU AROUND THE BLOCK WHEN YOU'RE DONE! TA!

DAMMIT. SO SICK OF ZAPPING THIS GOO AWAY.
AHEM. AVENGER USER TWO-ONE-ZED, ONE-NINE-SEVEN-SEVEN REQUESTING ENTRANCE.
PASSWORD, PLEASE.
PASSWORD, UGH, PASSWORD: HAM SANDWICH.
...WELCOME, JESSICA DREW.
MS. DREW, CAN I ASSIST YOU? YOU WEREN'T EXPECTED AT THIS FACILITY, AND WE'VE HAD NO CONTACT WITH MR. STARK SINCE THE ANOMALY BEGAN.
OH, TONY, UH... TONY SENT ME TO GET SOME EXTREMELY VALUABLE DATA! PROBABLY GONNA CRACK ALL THIS STUFF WIDE OPEN. SAVE THE WORLD, ETC. NO WORRIES, HE TOLD ME TO HELP MYSELF.
OF COURSE. I'LL LET LIEUTENANT COLONEL RHODES KNOW YOU'RE HERE!
RH-RHODEY'S HERE? AH, NO! WOULDN'T WANT TO BOTHER HIM.
KLIK
I'VE ALREADY NOTIFIED HIM. NO TROUBLE WHATSOEVER!
FANNNNTASTIC.

JESS! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? HAVE YOU HEARD FROM CAROL?
I, UM, DEFINITELY HAVEN'T. NOT AT ALL. HAVE, UH... HAVE YOU HEARD FROM CAROL?
TONY AND CAP WANTED ME HERE IN CASE WE NEEDED A FALLBACK POINT, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE--
BZZT BZZT
CAROL! BABE, WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT TH--
DOWNLOAD COMPLETE
JESS. WHAT DID YOU DO?
I GOTTA GO, RHODEY.

WHAT DID YOU *DO*, JESS?

KRRASH

Y'KNOW, I DIDN'T BELIEVE IT. WHEN CAROL TOLD ME WHAT THAT SERUM YOU WERE TAKING WAS DOING TO YOU.

RHODEY, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! *NONE* OF YOU UNDERSTAND! I NEED THIS!

DO YOU EVEN *KNOW* WHAT IS GOING ON OUT THERE? YOUR FRIENDS ARE OUT THERE! *CAROL* IS OUT THERE! AND INSTEAD OF HELPING THEM, YOU STEAL FROM US?

YOU ATTACKED YOUR BEST FRIE-- *AAAHH!*

ZZZAP

MISS DREW, PLEASE DESIST FROM DESTROYING THE LAB IMMEDIATELY.

SHOVE

NO!

AND I'M NOT *STEALING* ANYTHING. I'M TRYING...

KRAK-D

...TO *SAVE*...

BBUUUUUM

...MY LIFE!!!

SMASH

I CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE LIKE THIS, JESS!

FLING

AAAAHH!

FROOOSH

FROOOOSH

YOU SHOULD HAVE LEFT ME ALONE, RHODEY. ALL OF YOU.
KRUNCH
YOU SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED ME. CAROL SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED ME.
TELL CAROL...TELL... TELL HER NOT TO COME LOOKING FOR ME.

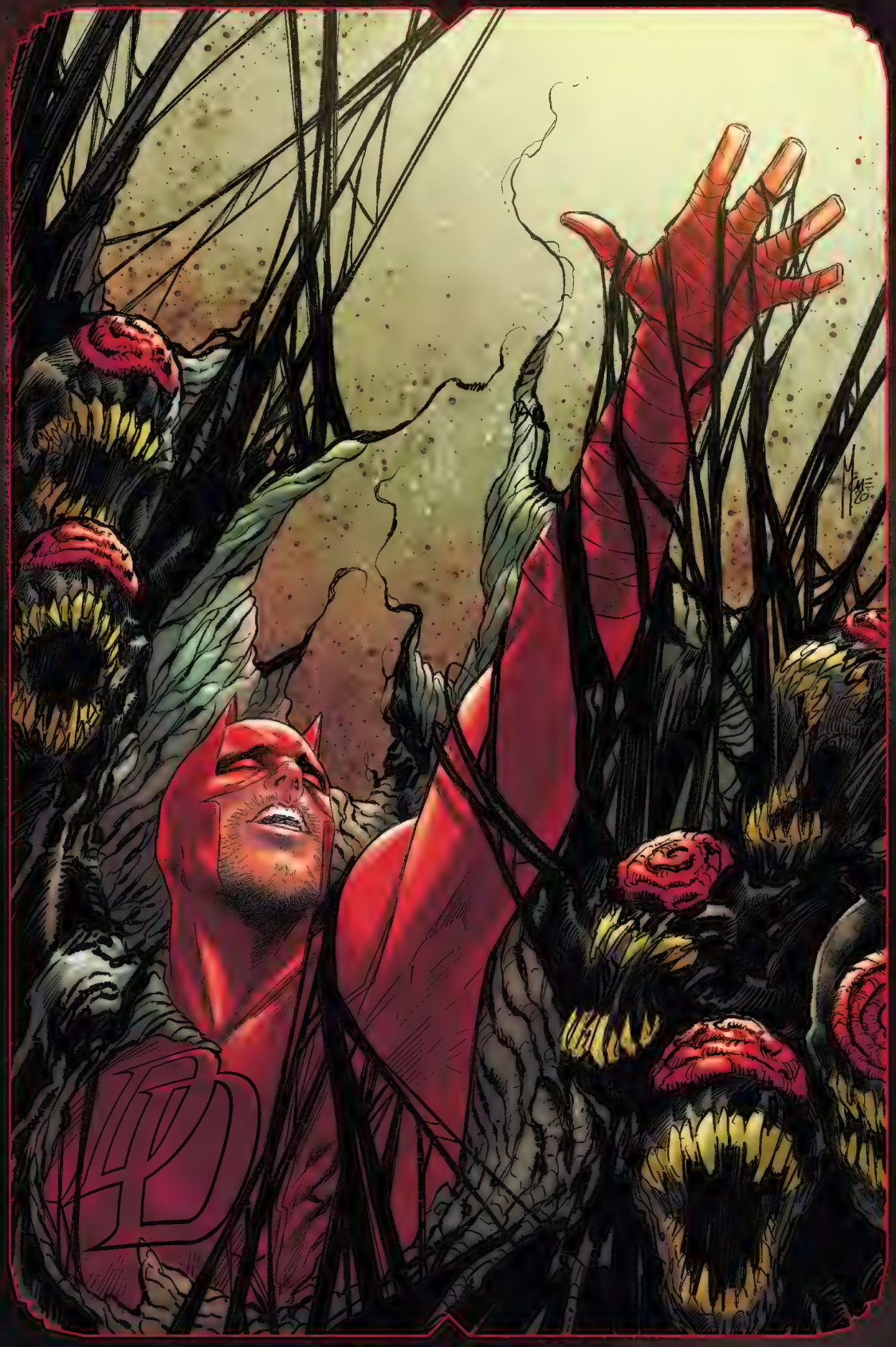
...SOOOO, HOW DID IT GO?
MM, NO. THAT WAS THE LAST OF IT.
YOU HAVE ANY MORE "ERRANDS?"
THEN GET ME THE HELL OUT OF HERE.
AND IF YOU'RE LYING TO ME--ABOUT THIS CURE, ABOUT ANY OF THIS...
OH, I'M SURE YOU'LL DO SOMETHING JUST WRETCHED TO ME.
BEST OF LUCK DOING ANYTHING *WORSE* THAN WHAT'S WAITING FOR ME IF WE FAIL IN THIS.

VOLCANO LAIR. I #%@ CALLED IT!
YES, YES, YOU'RE EVER SO CLEVER.
KDR-6181
Undisclosed Volcano Lair.
THIS IS-- THIS ISN'T YOUR UNDERGROUND VOLCANO LAIR, IS IT?
UNFORTUNATELY, NO. BUT ITS OWNER IS THE ONE WHO CAN SAVE US.
THE ONE WHO CAN SAVE US ALL.
MUM.

OPHELIA! DARLING! WHEN DID YOU GET HERE? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE AT SCHOOL--
HA! IT'S WINTER BREAK, MUM. YOU'RE ALWAYS TERRIBLE AT THE SCHEDULE.

OKAY. YOU HAVE A DAUGHTER. AND SHE HAS A VOLCANO LAIR? ALREADY???
OH, NO. THIS DOESN'T BELONG TO OPHELIA.
IT BELONGS TO...HIM.

HELLO, JESSICA. I BELIEVE YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR ME.
~~Undisclosed Volcano Lair~~
~~Secret Daughter Lair~~
High Evolutionary Lair???



DAREDEVIL #26

THE BLACK KITCHEN PART 1

Life is long. Life is stories.
If you aren't living the story, you're devouring them. Through books, through songs, television, movies.
Here in prison...
...the stories feel like they're on pause.
I can't reveal that I'm blind, that I'm *Matt Murdock*, so I turn away their printed books.
I ignore the TV blaring garbage. I abstain from Father Mullins' painting class.
Instead, I *listen.*
To my fellow prisoners. To *their* stories. Tales of *bravado* told to those with clout.
Tales of *regret* in the quiet corners. Lost loves, hard lives.
My story may be on pause, but now with nothing but time...
...maybe it's a chance to *listen.*
YOU'RE CREEPING EVERYONE OUT.

CLARENCE IN BLOCK D DOESN'T CREEP PEOPLE OUT LIKE YOU, AND HE'S A $#@% SERIAL KILLER, MAN.
SORRY, MARCUS, WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING?
ANYTHING, MAN. READ A BOOK, START A FIGHT.
EVERYONE WANTS TO KILL YOU, Y'KNOW. YOU AND YOUR MASKED BUDDIES PUT A LOT OF US HERE.
EVEN IN PRISON YOU'RE STILL A $@#% WHITE GUY IN A MASK. AT LEAST LUKE CAGE SHOWED HIS FACE WHEN HE BUSTED MY FRIENDS.
FINE. I'LL GO TO MY CELL.
OH, THAT DID IT, HUH? DID I MAKE YOU UNCOMFORTABLE, DEVIL-MAN?
DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL BE OUT OF HERE SOON.
MY SENTENCE IS TWO YEARS. I'LL SERVE IT JUST LIKE YOU'RE SERVING YOURS.
HA! YOU EVEN LISTEN TO YOURSELF?
THEY LET YOU IN HERE WITH A MASK! THEY THINK YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO GO AROUND AND BEAT PEOPLE UP IN SECRET!
I GOT BUSTED FOR HAVING SOME COKE ON ME, DEVIL-MAN. I CAN'T TAKE OFF A MASK WHEN I WALK OUT OF HERE IN THREE YEARS FOR A FRESH START.
YOU CAN GO BACK TO BEING A DOCTOR OR COP OR LAWYER OR WHATEVER. THEY ALREADY TOLD YOU YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME.
YOU SERVING YOUR FULL TERM IS A FANTASY.
BACK IT UP, MARCUS.
DOC
YOU CAN GIVE SPEECHES TO "DAREDEVIL" HERE...

"...AFTER THE WARDEN GIVES HIM HIS."
I APOLOGIZE. NORMALLY I WOULD HAVE MET YOU ON YOUR ARRIVAL WEEKS AGO...
...BUT I'VE BEEN PREOCCUPIED.
I UNDERSTAND. I DON'T WANT SPECIAL TREATMENT, WARDEN.
PLEASE, JUST MR. HOLLIS. I BELIEVE YOU KNEW MY SON?
YES. MASON HOLLIS. FORMER A.D.A. I--
HAD HIM ARRESTED, DURING ONE OF HIS PSYCHOTIC BREAKS AS CRIME-WAVE.*
HE'S DOING WELL, YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW.
*IN DAREDEVIL VOL. 1, #59! --ED
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, BUT I HARBOR NO ILL WILL.
MY SON WAS HURTING PEOPLE AND NEEDED TO BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE...
...JUST LIKE YOU.
Marcus is wrong. I'm not getting out of here early.
Except in a body bag.

I WILL KILL YOU.
AHHH!!!
I won't kill him. I want to, but I promised Matthew.
Elektra would kill him. "Daredevil" wouldn't. This gunrunner doesn't need to know that.
P-P-PLEASE! I S-SWEAR I'LL N-NEVER--
YOU WON'T.
HNF!
NOT IN HELL'S KITCHEN.
I DON'T CARE WHERE YOU PEDDLE YOUR ILLEGAL WARES, IT JUST WON'T BE HERE. BECAUSE IF I SEE YOU AGAIN...
...I'LL END YOUR LIFE.
--that together we could defeat the Hand. Together...
...we could save...
SKREEEE!
What does Matthew ever hope to accomplish? I could bring these men to the police, but that's just another cycle of corruption.
If only he'd see what I wish to do with the Fist--

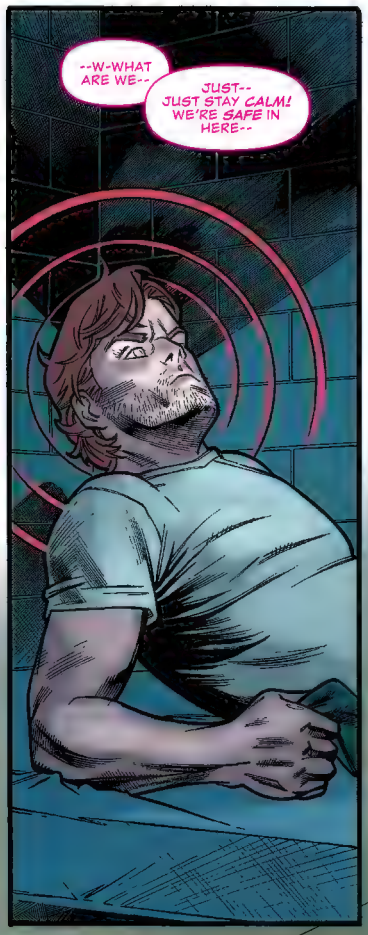
RRRRAAAA!
...the world.

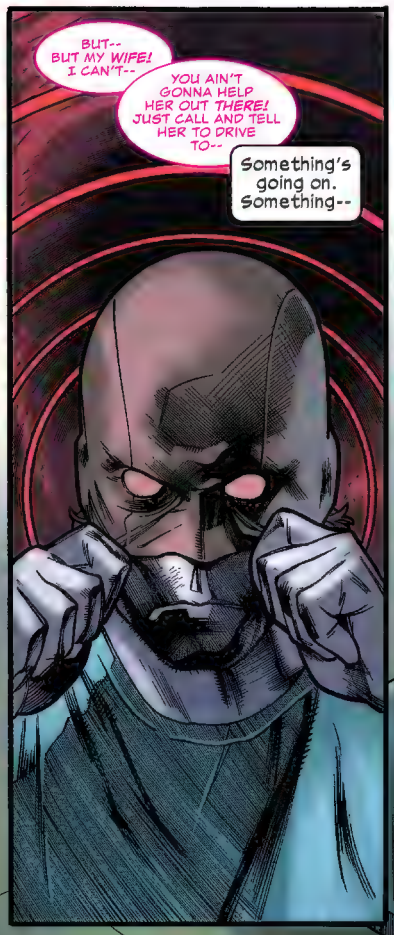
--CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH, MAYOR FISK. THE FOUNDATION TRULY APPRECIATES YOUR BEING HERE.
NONSENSE. IT'S MY PLEASURE.
I'M SURE YOU HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL THESE DAYS.
DIDN'T YOU JUST HAVE THAT "DAREDEVIL" MURDERER ARRESTED--
--AND NOW THERE'S A NEW ONE? THAT'S GOTTA BE--
HEY.
WHOA, WHOA, WHO--
TAKE A WALK.
NOW.
IT'S OKAY, MARY...
THE CITIZENS OF HELL'S KITCHEN SEEM TO ENJOY DRESSING UP AS THE DEVIL. IT'S NO CONCERN.
MY LIFE IS IN NO DANGER HERE. I CAN HANDLE MYSELF.
WE NEED TO GO.
WESLEY?
THE CLASS E SITUATION WE WERE WARNED ABOUT IS HAPPENING. WE HAVE TO--
HEY! I'M HEAD OF SECURITY! LOOP ME IN FOR--

IF YOU'D WEAR YOUR EARPIECE, MS. WALKER, YOU'D KNOW WHAT THE SITUATION IS.
AND IF YOU READ THE FILES I SENT, YOU'D KNOW THE AVENGERS--
WESLEY, ENOUGH.
WHAT ARE WE DEALING WITH?
ALIEN. OVER THE CITY NOW. MULTIPLE BATTLES WITH THE SUPER HERO POPULATION, BUT--
SKRAAAAA--
KROOM
BANG BANG BANG
$%#@!
GET HIM OUT OF HERE, WESLEY!
MARY!

NO! WE'RE NOT LEAVING WITHOUT--
BANG BANG
BANG
SIR! WE HAVE TO GET YOU TO THE PANIC ROOM!
THE CITY NEEDS YOU IN ONE PIECE!
SIR!
YOU TWO NEED TO L-- RAHHHH!
BANG BANG
NF! #@$@% OIL SPILL! BURN, D-DAMN YOU! B...
SKREEEE
...B-BURN...
The nights are the worst.

I spent years soundproofing my bedroom so I could sleep properly.
But in *prison*, I hear every muttered slip from their *dreams*. Names of loved ones, involuntary confessions.
God, this place is turning me into a bad poet. But all the residual sadness keeps me awake. Keeps me--


--W-WHAT ARE WE--
JUST-- JUST STAY *CALM!* WE'RE *SAFE* IN HERE--


BUT-- BUT MY *WIFE!* I CAN'T--
YOU AIN'T GONNA HELP HER OUT *THERE!* JUST CALL AND TELL HER TO DRIVE TO--
Something's going on. Something--

What is *that?*
SHSHSHGLSH

GUARDS! QUICK!

SOMETHING'S IN THE PRISON! SOMETHING--
HOLY...

BANG BANG BANG
The smell...
...like gasoline and swamp water.
G-G-GET AWAY!
RRAHHH!!!
BANG
BANG BANG
It's Venom. But--but different somehow...
These guys don't stand a chance.
LET ME OUT!
DAMMIT, I CAN HELP! THIS THING'LL KILL YOU! LET ME--
BOOM BOOM
SKRAHH!!!
THOOM
"WE'RE GOING HOME!"

NOW.
NO, I'M HAVING A NICE TIME.
LEAVE HER ALONE, LADY. WE WERE HAVIN' A FRIENDLY CHAT HERE WHILE WHATEVER'S GOIN' ON OUT THERE DIES DOWN.
SHE'S MY DAUGHTER AND SHE'S SIXTEEN, YOU $#@%!
MOM!
WHOA, WHOA, I DIDN'T KNOW--
OOF... UH...MY BAD.
DIDN'T CHECK THAT I.D. CLOSELY ENOUGH, I GUESS.
WHY CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?!
DAMMIT, ALICE, I'M STILL YOUR MOTHER! THE WORLD IS ENDING, AND YOU CAN'T--
YOU'RE NOT--
SLAP
--MY MOTHER!

I...
$@# YOU. YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME.
YOU JUST CARE HOW IT LOOKS TO YOUR FRIENDS AND CLIENTS!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! I'M DOING MY BEST HERE, ALICE. I--
SKREEE!
SKREEE!
SKRAAA!
AHHH!!!
MOM!!!
ALLLL... RRR...
M-MOM! MOM, CAN YOU--
ALLLLLLICCCCCE...

DON'T GO, MY LOVE... I HAVE SUCH PLANS.
AHHHHH!
NO, NO, NO, THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING, THIS CAN'T--
ALICCCCCE...
I WON'T HURT YOU, MY LOVE.
AHHH!
YOU'RE MY DAUGHTER.
YOU'RE OUR DAUGHTER.
YOU CAN BE LIKE US TOO, ALIIICCCE...
TWO PARENTS AS ONE... TWO CHILDREN AS ONE...
A LOVE THAT SPANS THE UNIVERSE, THE--

YOU THERE. GIRL.
CAN YOU RUN?
I-- I THINK SO...
HIDE IN THERE, AMONG THE GARBAGE. IF THESE THINGS ARE HUNTERS, THEY MAY TRACK WITH SCENT.
O-OKAY...
Of course it isn't just gunrunners and drug lords.
Matt's life is a horror show. His city is a horror show.
ALICCCCE...YOU KNOW WE RARELY APPROVE OF YOUR FRIENDSSSS...
Save who you can.

"DAMMIT! LISTEN TO ME!"
YAAHH!!!
SKRAHHH!
NO NO NO
OFFICER BAKER! PLEASE!
I CAN HELP! LET ME!
IT'S YOUR ONLY CHANCE!
GRAHHHRR!!! WHO ELSE?!
WHO ELSE DEFIES OUR LORD KNULL?!

I DO.
FOOOOOL--
I can "defy" all I want, but trapped in here with these things...
...I'm in over my head.
"MOVE, DAMMIT!"

WE NEED TO GET YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE!
Where though? A bank? Underground?
NHH!
The girl is weak.
HH-HHH... I C-CAN'T... I--
DARLING...
...IT'S ALL RIGHT, BABY...
I should leave her...go to whatever the source of these monsters is...
...MOTHER'S HERE...
...KNULL IS HERE.
...but dammit, Matthew. You're in my head--judging.

This girl will not die today.
PARDON ME, "MOTHER"...
...BUT TYPHOID WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH "DAREDEVIL" HERE!
HAHAHAHA!

Even in prison I'm called to fight.
To use my fists to save God's creatures, even the ones who've lost their way...
HNF!
...against the godless.

Who...who are you?

I AM KNULL.

IT IS TIME.

What's...what's happening to me...

WE ARE BONDING.

Why?

TO BE BETTER. DON'T YOU WANT TO BE BETTER?

I do. I try.

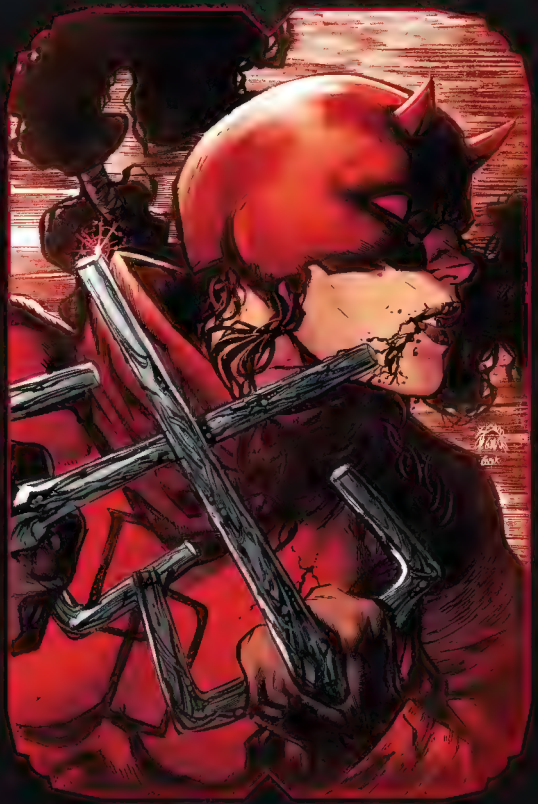
God help me, I try.

THEN HEAR ME. HEAR THIS VOICE INSIDE YOU THE WAY I HEAR YOUR HEART.

YOU ARE A MAN WITHOUT FEAR. I AM PURE POWER. AT ONE...

...WE ARE UNSTOPPABLE!

DAREDEVIL #26 COVER AND CONNECTING VARIANT BY
MARCO CHECCHETTO & MATTHEW WILSON

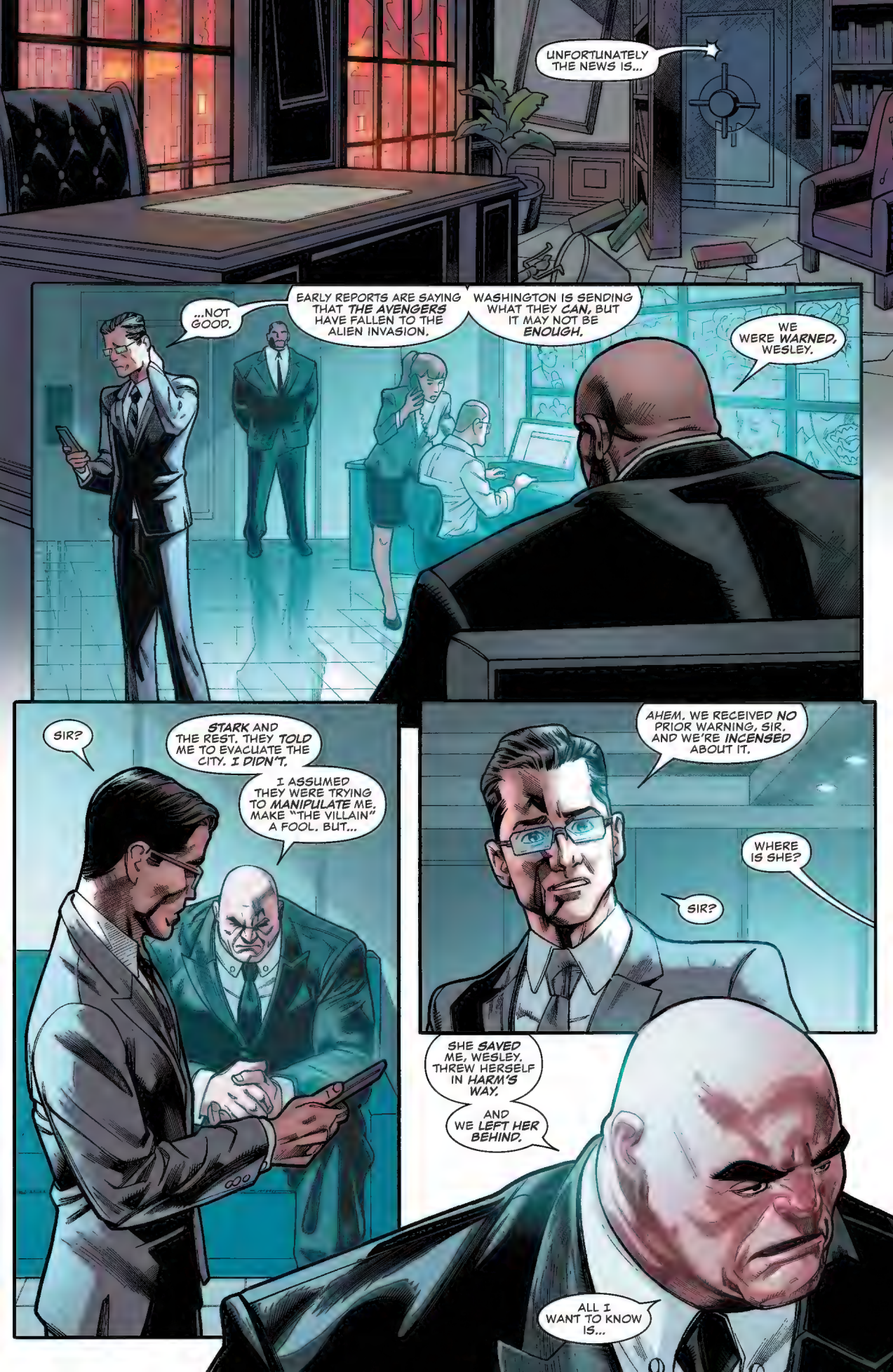


DAREDEVIL #26 SECOND PRINTING VARIANT BY
RYAN STEGMAN

DAREDEVIL #27 MARVEL MASTERPIECES
300TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT BY
EMA LUPACCHINO & DAVID CURIEL

DAREDEVIL #27

THE BLACK KITCHEN PART 2


UNFORTUNATELY THE NEWS IS...
...NOT GOOD.
EARLY REPORTS ARE SAYING THAT THE AVENGERS HAVE FALLEN TO THE ALIEN INVASION.
WASHINGTON IS SENDING WHAT THEY CAN, BUT IT MAY NOT BE ENOUGH.
WE WERE WARNED, WESLEY.
SIR?
STARK AND THE REST. THEY TOLD ME TO EVACUATE THE CITY. I DIDN'T.
I ASSUMED THEY WERE TRYING TO MANIPULATE ME, MAKE "THE VILLAIN" A FOOL. BUT...
AHEM. WE RECEIVED NO PRIOR WARNING, SIR, AND WE'RE INCENSED ABOUT IT.
WHERE IS SHE?
SIR?
SHE SAVED ME, WESLEY, THREW HERSELF IN HARM'S WAY.
AND WE LEFT HER BEHIND.
ALL I WANT TO KNOW IS...

"...WHERE'S MARY?"
LITTLE GIRLS, LITTLE GIRLS, I'LL KILL BOTH OF YOU...
...BUT ONLY ONE OF YOU IS ON MY LIST, AND THAT'S YOU...
"...DAREDEVILLLLL."
I don't know who this is, but they must be as blind as Matt...
NO! THEY'RE MINE!
RRAHH! KNULL DEMANDS SERVANTS!
KNULL WANTS DEATH!!!
...since it's far too soon for me to be on anyone's list.
WH-WHO ARE YOU? WHAT'S--
SHUT UP AND RUN!

OH GOD, OH-- WH-WHERE--
THERE'S A BUILDING AHEAD! HIDE THERE! HIDE WELL!
WH-WHERE ARE YOU--
I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE--
--NO ONE FOLLOWS.
PAF
The city is on fire.
I suppose it's my job now as Daredevil...
...to put it out.

WHY DO YOU RESIST?
I DON'T WANT THIS.
TO BE BETTER? TO BE KNULL?
YOU'RE THE DEVIL. I'M A... A MAN OF GOD.
REDUCTIVE. FOOLISH. I SEE YOUR HEART...
...YOU WELCOME THE DEVIL.
I... But I strive...to live in God's light...
DON'T YOU SEE? YOU DO LIVE IN GOD'S LIGHT...
...MY LIGHT.
KNULL'S LIGHT.
NO.

RAHH!!!
TOOM
GRR!
IMPRESSIVE.
KRKRAH
RARRHH!
BEINGS ACROSS THE UNIVERSE—ACROSS MILLENNIA—HAVE TRIED TO RESIST ME...
...TO NO AVAIL.
BUT THE ONES WHO ALMOST WIN...

...DO SO WITH MADNESS OR FALSE FAITH.
BUT YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE IN YOUR "GOD," DO YOU?
WHEN YOUR LOVED ONES DIE AND ASCEND TO YOUR "HEAVEN"...
...YOU WEEP.
YOU WAIL.
BECAUSE DEEP IN YOUR HEART YOU KNOW...
...THERE'S NO SUCH THING. WHICH IS WHY KNULL WINS.
No. You're wrong.
I weep... I wail...
...because deep down, I suspect...
...I'm not worthy of God's love...
HNN!

...and heaven is out of my reach.
DARRRRREDEVILLLLL...
COME OUT AND--
--PLAY?
KRAKOOM
That'll buy me some time.
Now, where's--

AHHHH!
AHHH!
Dammit! I should have told the child to keep *running!*
These *creatures* can clearly lock onto *scents.*
How can I even *stop*--
PLEASE, *PLEASE*, MOM, DON'T--
I'M KNULL, SWEET GIRL...
...AND YOU'LL BE KNULL SOON TOO.
#!@%. How do I *stop* this? What would Matt--

I APPRECIATE--
RAHH!
SHNK
NKNK
KRSHH
--THE UPGRADE, LORD KNULL...
AHHH! MOM!!!
...BUT I'VE ALREADY GOT VOICES IN MY HEAD, SO LET MARY DO HER JOB HERE...
...AND THEN I'M ALL-- HN!
RUN, CHILD!
NOW!
SHE WANTS ME!

I WANT YOU.

MATTHEW MURDOCK.

THE MAN OF CONTRADICTIONS.

GIVE IN TO KNULL.

YOU THINK YOU'RE A GOD, BUT YOU'RE A FOOL.

I'M NOT JUST MATT MURDOCK...

...I'M DAREDEVIL.

HRNGH!

KTHOOM

AND YOU'RE #@#!%&.

KNULL...

RAHH!

I CAST YOU OUT.

THIS ISN'T A VICTORY, DAREDEVIL.

MY SOLDIERS ARE NEEDED ELSEWHERE.

FREEZE!

HE'S TRYING TO HELP, YOU--

BANG BANG

BUT I'M STILL WITH YOU, AREN'T I?

MY POWER--
RRRAHH!!!
OH-- OH GOD, PLEASE--
MY RAGE.
NNNHH...
HNF.
DAREDEVIL! YOU #$@% IDIOT! JUST--
--GO!
MY POWER.
ISN'T IT JUST A PATH TOWARD FREEDOM?
I'm...I'm here to make amends...
To do what's right...
...so my soul knows freedom.

OKAY, WELL, THAT'S NOT GOOD. ANY NEWS FROM--
WE'RE STILL WAITING FOR WORD ON THE NATIONAL GUARD. MAYBE--
ENOUGH. I'M DONE COWERING IN THIS BOX.
WE KNOW FROM THE BATTLE OF HELL'S KITCHEN THAT THE CITY NEEDS TO SEE ME TAKING ACTION.
SIR...
I HAVE THE BEST TEAMS WORKING TO FIND MARY.
THEY'VE ALREADY FOUND--
I'M LEAVING.
MAYOR FISK, PROTOCOLS ARE--
WE CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE.
I SEE. WELL, THEN...
...WHO AMONG YOU SHOULD I KILL FIRST?
I THOUGHT SO.
WESLEY, I'M GOING OUT.

I felt it before. Your weakness.
MY WEAKNESS IS YOU.
Maybe...
...maybe not.
KRSH
NF... NHHH...
IT'S GETTING HARD, ISN'T IT?
TO KEEP CONTROL... TO KEEP ME AT BAY.
SH... SHUT UP...
...YOU WON'T... W-WON'T...
OH, REALLY?
HNN... NHHH...

NO.
YES, MATTHEW. NO ONE CAN FIGHT FOREVER...
...EXCEPT THOSE WHO LIVE FOREVER.
Well...I believe...
...so I will...

HN.
...live...
RRAHHHH!
RHNNN...
FSZZZZSZZZZKRKF
SEE... FOREVER IS... IS EASY...

"...IF YOU HAVE FAITH."
JUST DIE ALREADY!
HN! I THINK YOU HAVE ME CONFUSED WITH--
--ANOTHER DARE--
HNH!
RRSH
Dammit.
She's too powerful. How does Matt do this?
I know how he does it: He punches the monsters until they fall.
Like a fool.

Stop trying to be like Matthew.
This isn't a punch-up.
This is strategy...
...and you're Elektra Natchios...
...the queen of strategy.
KRNCH

HUH.
NO BREATH. NO LIFE.
I DID IT.
FOR WILSON.
WELL?
ARE YOU READY TO JOIN US?
KNULL. DEAL'S A DEAL.
I SUCCUMB.
TYPHOID MARY'S ALL YOURS.
E-EVERYONE'S DEAD. THIS IS A NIGHTMARE. HOW--

HHHH!
AHHH!
You don't have to always be like Matt to be Daredevil...
H-HOW--
STOPPED MY HEART. STOPPED MY BREATHING.
NO USE FIGHTING HER. WHATEVER'S HAPPENING IS A WAR, AND SHE'S JUST A FOOT SOLDIER.
SHE NEEDED ME DEAD, SO I GAVE HER--
SHE'S DEAD...
...MOM'S DEAD... WHY...
...WHY IS TH-THIS H-HAPPENING...
...but sometimes...
I'M SORRY.
...it couldn't hurt to try.

BLACK CAT #1

QUEEN IN BLACK PART 1

MONEY.
OPERATIONAL FUNDS.
IT COSTS MONEY TO RUN GIGS. GOT TO SPEND IT TO MAKE IT, RIGHT?
BRIBES, EQUIPMENT, DOCUMENTS, SNITCHES... IT ADDS UP.
KASH
AMBITION AND GREED MAY BE THE ENGINE OF A HEIST...
...BUT MONEY IS THE FUEL.

AND NOT JUST FOR THIEVES LIKE US, EITHER.
OUTFITS LIKE S.H.I.E.L.D. THREW BLACK MONEY--UNTRACEABLE, LAUNDERED CASH--AROUND LIKE IT WAS CANDY FOR THE SAME REASONS.
AND WITH S.H.I.E.L.D. GONE, WORD ON THE STREETS HAS IT THAT THERE'S STILL CACHES OF THE STUFF *ALL OVER* IN FORGOTTEN DROPS.
PROBLEM IS, I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO FIND THEM.
BUT *SOMEONE* DOES.
AND WITH THE CITY IN EVACUATION, IT'S THE PERFECT TIME FOR THEM TO GO FOR IT.
S.H.I.E.L.D. EVEN LEFT BEHIND THE PERFECT GETAWAY ROUTE: A *SECRET HIGHWAY SYSTEM* DEEP BELOW MANHATTAN.

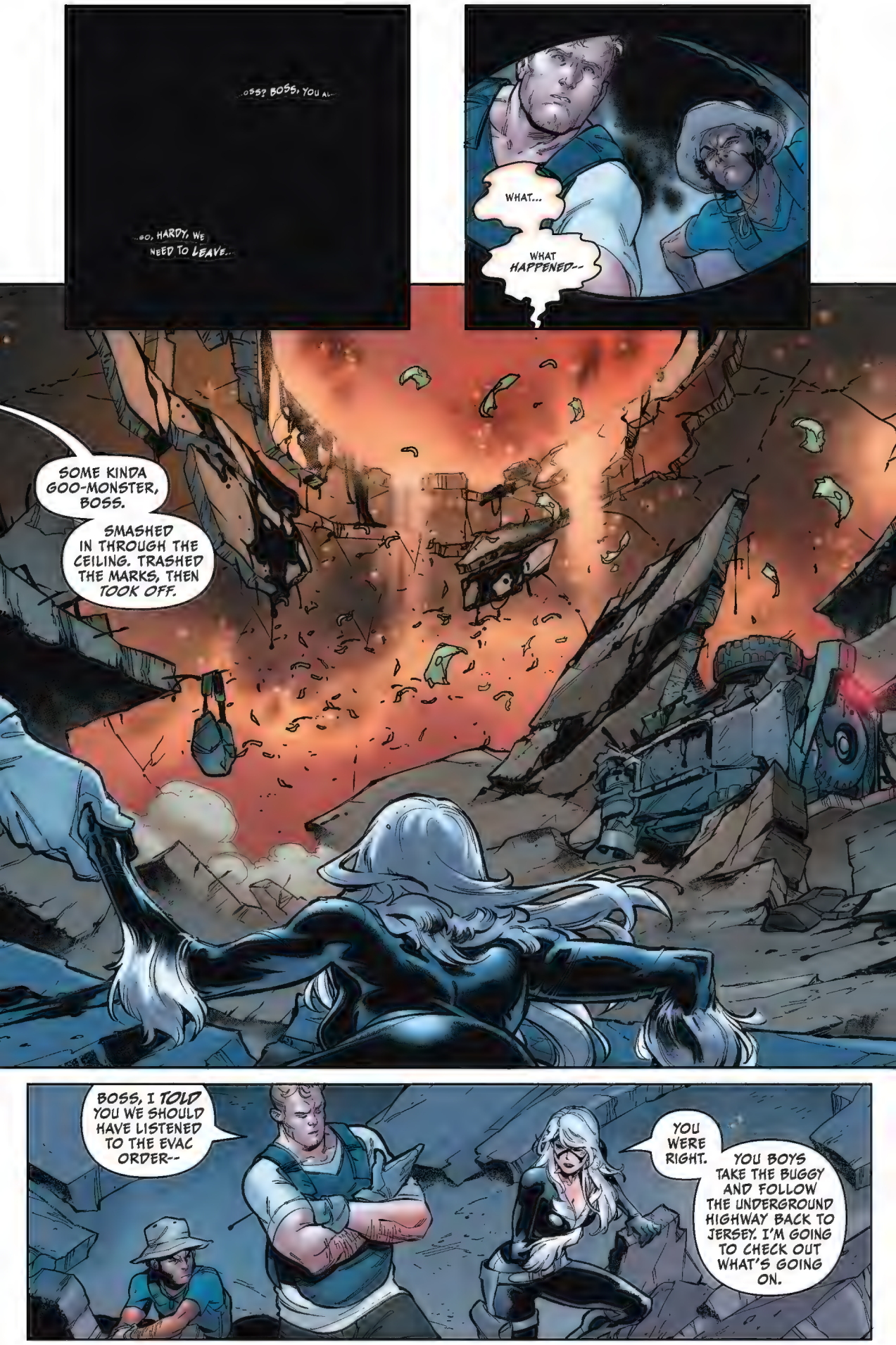
WHICH MAKES SOMEONE THE PERFECT TARGET.
SO HOW DO YOU SNEAK UP ON A VEHICLE MOVING THROUGH A SECRET UNDERGROUND TUNNEL?
I'M GLAD YOU ASKED.

WHAT?!
HE WASN'T USING IT.
IT WAS JUST SITTING THERE!
THERE'S THIS TERM.
TOECUTTER.
AUSTRALIAN CRIMINAL SLANG.
TOECUTTERS WERE CROOKS WHO DIDN'T BOTHER TO DO THE JOB THEMSELVES.
INSTEAD, THEY WAITED FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO DO THE WORK, AND RIPPED THEM OFF.
WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT WE'RE DOING HERE.
EASY PICKINGS--

12:37 A.M.
THE AVENGERS' DEFENSE OF THE EARTH FAILS.
THE KING IN BLACK DESCENDS.

WHISPERS

UmmNGHHhh!


...OSS? BOSS, YOU AL...
...GO, HARDY. WE NEED TO LEAVE...
WHAT...
WHAT HAPPENED--
SOME KINDA GOO-MONSTER, BOSS.
SMASHED IN THROUGH THE CEILING. TRASHED THE MARKS, THEN TOOK OFF.
BOSS, I TOLD YOU WE SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO THE EVAC ORDER--
YOU WERE RIGHT.
YOU BOYS TAKE THE BUGGY AND FOLLOW THE UNDERGROUND HIGHWAY BACK TO JERSEY. I'M GOING TO CHECK OUT WHAT'S GOING ON.

YOU'RE STAYING HERE?
ARE YOU INSANE?

OR DID YOU HIT YOUR HEAD HARDER THAN WE THOUGHT?
BOTH, PROBABLY.
BOING!
BOING!
BUT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING MESSED UP MY JOB.
AND I DON'T LET ANYONE DO THAT AND GET AWAY WITHOUT SO MUCH AS A BLACK EYE OR A BLOODY NOSE.

THERE WAS AN EVACUATION ORDER FOR NEW YORK.
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS AN EVACUATION ORDER FOR NEW YORK.
IT'S LIKE FIRE DRILLS. YOU DON'T EXPECT IT TO ACTUALLY MATTER.

THERE WAS JUST AN ALIEN INVASION. THE AVENGERS STOPPED IT.
THAT'S HOW IT WORKS. THE AVENGERS ALWAYS STOP THEM.

YOU GET USED TO IT.
YOU STOP ASKING THE QUESTION--

"WHAT IF THEY DIDN'T?"

WHRUNCH!
WHAT THEN?
GET THOSE CIVILIANS INTO THE QUINJET! PUSH BACK THE SYMBIOTES. I DON'T CARE HOW YOU DO IT!
SYMBIOTES?!
ZAPP!
ZZZZAAAK!
I DON'T BELIEVE IN AMERICA. NEVER HAVE.
AMERICA IS BUILT ON THEFT. THEFT OF LAND. LIVES. DIGNITY.
IS THIS--IS THIS VENOM STUFF?
THEFT OF MY FATHER FOR MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE.
BUT THEY CALL ME THE CROOK.
HI, YOU PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER, BUT WE MET BEFORE--
YOU'RE FELICIA HARDY. THE BLACK CAT?
SPIDER-MAN'S TALKED ABOUT YOU.
HE HAS?
I DON'T BELIEVE IN AMERICA.
BUT SEEING HIM, HEARING HIM TALK...
I'M GLAD YOU CAME. WE NEED EVERY HAND WE CAN GET IF WE'RE GOING TO TURN THIS AROUND.
...I ALMOST FEEL LIKE I COULD.
CHAK!

KRA
KOOOM!
WE HAVE THE WORLD'S SORCERER SUPREME AND THE X-MEN ON OUR SIDE.
WE HAVE TO TRUST IN THEM TO HOLD UP THEIR END, SO FOLKS LIKE US CAN KEEP THE CIVILIANS SAFE.
RIGHT.
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST MERLIN.

LOOK AT HIM.
THE POWER.
PROBABLY BEST HE DOESN'T NOTICE ME AS I ROBBED HIM RECENTLY.
TWICE.
WAIT--

NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT--
SHRIP!
THEY CAN'T BEAT HIM--
THEY CAN'T--
THEY CAN'T--

THEY CAN.
"WHAT HAPPENED THEN?"
"IT WAS LIKE SCENES FROM A NIGHTMARE.
"YOU KNOW HOW IT COMES TO YOU LATER IN FLASHES?

"THE DEVIL HIMSELF APPEARED.
"A GOD OF LIGHT CAME TO OUR AID...
"...AND WAS TORN APART.
"AND OUR HEROES, THE ONES WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO CLEAR ALL THIS MESS UP?
"THEY WERE... TAKEN."

I GOT AWAY.
I ALWAYS GET AWAY.
AND THEN I GOT TO THINKING.
THIS IS ABOVE MY PAY GRADE. THIS IS NOT THE KIND OF THING ME AND MY BOYS HANDLE.
WE'RE NOT WORLD-BEATERS. WE'RE NOT COSMIC WHOZITS. WE'RE THIEVES. WE STEAL THINGS.
BUT I MEANT WHAT I SAID EARLIER.
WHATEVER THIS THING IS CALLED--
KNULL. IT'S CALLED KNULL.
WHATEVER. I DO FULLY INTEND TO GIVE IT A BLOODY NOSE.
WHICH BRINGS US HERE, TO JOLLY OLDE ALCHEMAX.
YOUR SECURITY LOCKDOWN PROTOCOLS COULD USE SOME WORK, BY THE WAY.
AND THE ONE PERSON I KNOW WHO KNOWS HOW TO HURT ALL THIS SYMBIOTE STUFF.
HIYA, DR. STEVE. IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
DR. STEVE? WHAT, DO YOU HAVE ONLY ONE NAME? LIKE CHER?
YES, "DR. KORPSE," I DO.
Hmm. FAIR.

A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MS. HARDY.
FIRST EDWARD COMES TO WARN ME ABOUT THE COMING DANGER, AND NOW YOU PAY ME A VISIT.
PLEASE CATCH ME UP, ARE YOU STILL CURRENTLY A CRIME BOSS? OR A VIGILANTE NOW? VILLAIN?
YOU PEOPLE MAKE IT SO HARD TO KEEP TRACK.
CUTE, COMING FROM VENOM'S BEST FRIEND.
EDWARD BROCK IS A HERO.
HE IS A MAN, JUST A MAN, BESET BY COSMIC FORCES--
SPARE ME THE HAGIOGRAPHY. BROCK'S A DANGEROUS LOSER, NOTHING MORE.
WHAT I NEED TO KNOW IS, ARE YOU PART OF THE CREW OR NOT?
CREW? WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD I JOIN YOUR CREW?
BECAUSE WE NEED YOU, DR. STEVE.
BECAUSE WE'RE GOING TO GO OUT THERE AND GIVE THIS KNULL A BLACK EYE BY RUNNING A JOB ON HIM.
STEAL?! FROM KNULL?!

WHAT IN THE WORLD COULD YOU POSSIBLY STEAL FROM HIM?
GAP!
HARDY!
LISTEN TO ME, THERE'S NO TIME.
YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE, TO KEEP ON FIGHTING!
NO, I CAN HELP YOU--
FORGET ABOUT ME, YOU NEED TO GET HIM OUT!
YOU'RE SLIPPERY, SMART, A BORN SURVIVOR. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DO THIS!

THAT'S AN ORDER!
FALL BACK, REGROUP, THEN FIND A WAY TO BREAK HIM OUT!
THE WORLD NEEDS HIM MORE THAN US!
LIKE I SAID.
WE'RE NOT WORLD-BEATERS. WE'RE NOT COSMIC WHOZITS.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO STEAL ONE.
WE'RE GOING TO STEAL DOCTOR STRANGE!

BLACK CAT #1 VARIANT BY
SARA PICHELLI

BLACK CAT #1 VARIANT BY
PATRICK GLEASON & MARTE GRACIA

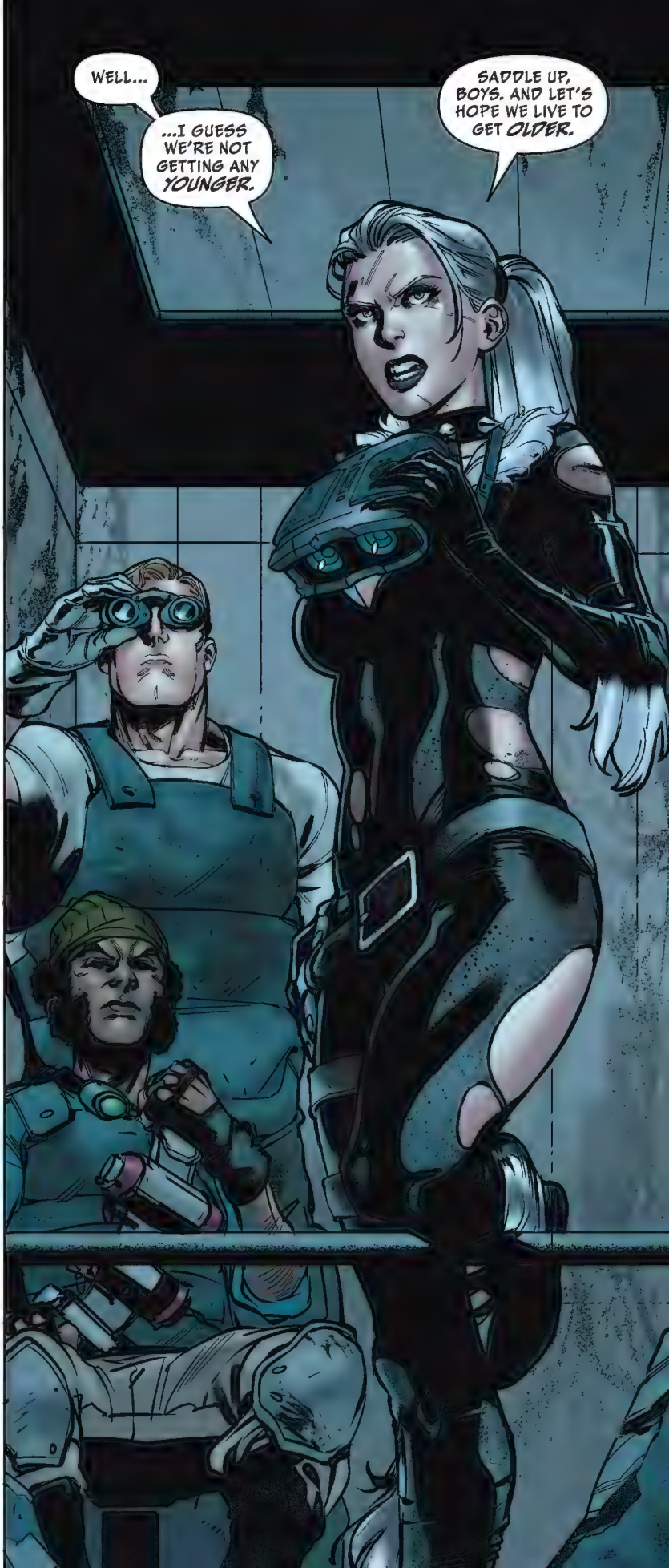
BLACK CAT #1 VARIANT BY
C.F. VILLA & BRIAN REBER

BLACK CAT #1 VARIANT BY
SKOTTIE YOUNG

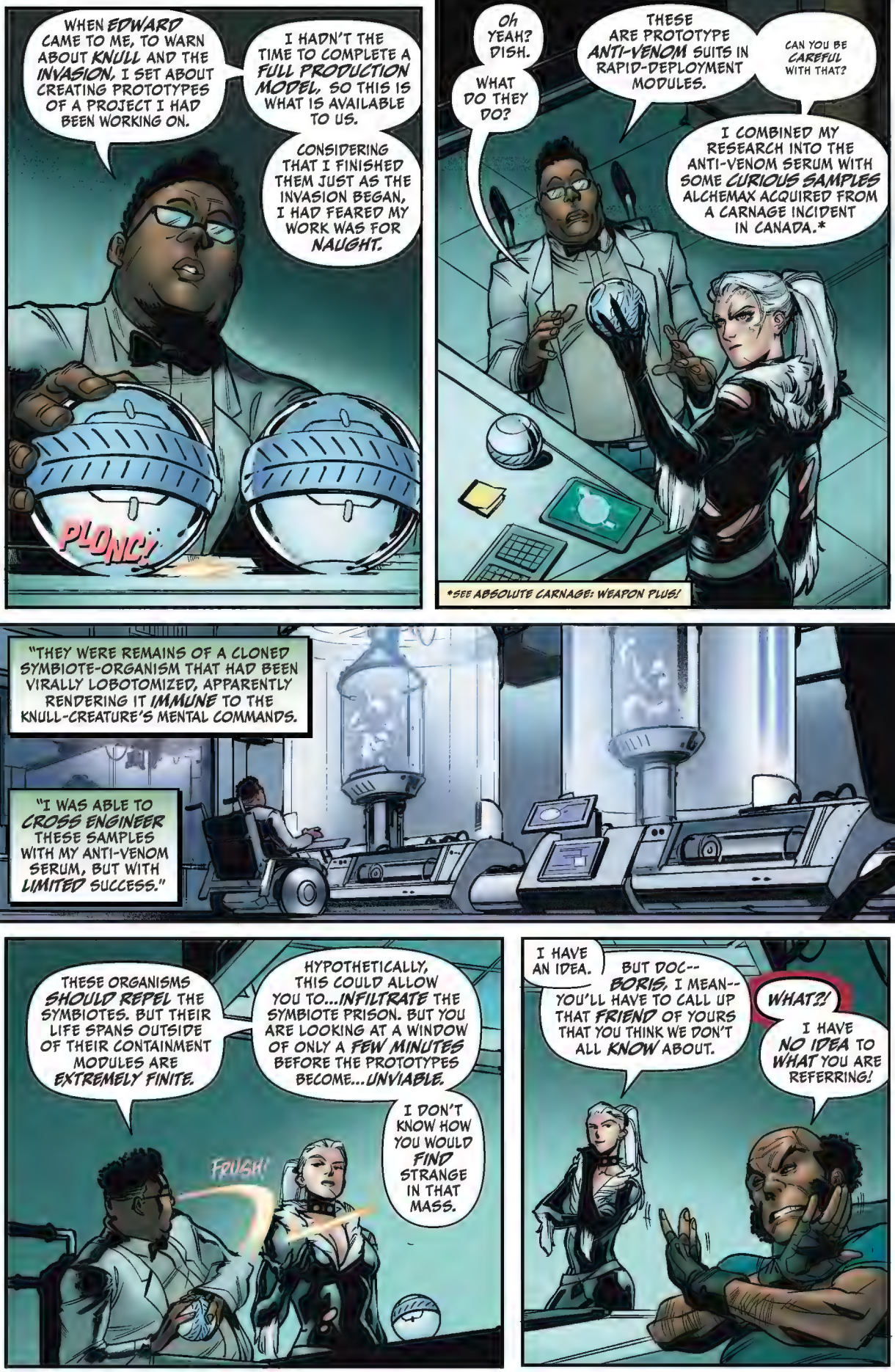
BLACK CAT #2

QUEEN IN BLACK PART 2

THERE IT IS.
"DOCTOR STRANGE'S PRISON, STUCK ON THE TOP OF THE CHRYSLER BUILDING LIKE AN EVIL BOWLING TROPHY.
"NO BIG DEAL. JUST A COUPLE TONS OF ALIEN SLIME BETWEEN US AND THE BIG-TIME MERLIN."


WELL...
...I GUESS WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER.
SADDLE UP, BOYS. AND LET'S HOPE WE LIVE TO GET OLDER.

ALCHEMAX. TWO HOURS AGO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU REALLY THINK THIS CAN BE DONE.
DR. STEVE, LET ME LIST THE PEOPLE I'VE RIPPED OFF IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS.
DOCTOR STRANGE.
REED RICHARDS.
DANNY RAND (THE IRON FIST).
KADE KILGORE.
TONY STARK.
NEED I GO ON?
YOU THINK I'M GOING TO BAT AN EYE AT RUNNING GAME ON SOME GOOFY ALIEN SPACE GOD?
ANY SAFE CAN BE CRACKED.
IT JUST COMES DOWN TO INFORMATION, EQUIPMENT, SKILL...
...AND LUCK.
WE'VE GOT ABOUT AS MUCH INFORMATION AS WE CAN HOPE FOR, THE SKILL, AND HOPEFULLY THE LUCK.
WHAT CAN YOU DO FOR US EQUIPMENT-WISE?


WHEN EDWARD CAME TO ME, TO WARN ABOUT KNULL AND THE INVASION, I SET ABOUT CREATING PROTOTYPES OF A PROJECT I HAD BEEN WORKING ON.
I HADN'T THE TIME TO COMPLETE A FULL PRODUCTION MODEL, SO THIS IS WHAT IS AVAILABLE TO US.
CONSIDERING THAT I FINISHED THEM JUST AS THE INVASION BEGAN, I HAD FEARED MY WORK WAS FOR NAUGHT.
PLONC!
Oh YEAH? DISH.
WHAT DO THEY DO?
THESE ARE PROTOTYPE ANTI-VENOM SUITS IN RAPID-DEPLOYMENT MODULES.
CAN YOU BE CAREFUL WITH THAT?
I COMBINED MY RESEARCH INTO THE ANTI-VENOM SERUM WITH SOME CURIOUS SAMPLES ALCHEMAX ACQUIRED FROM A CARNAGE INCIDENT IN CANADA.*
*SEE ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: WEAPON PLUS!
"THEY WERE REMAINS OF A CLONED SYMBIOTE-ORGANISM THAT HAD BEEN VIRALLY LOBOTOMIZED, APPARENTLY RENDERING IT IMMUNE TO THE KNULL-CREATURE'S MENTAL COMMANDS.
"I WAS ABLE TO CROSS ENGINEER THESE SAMPLES WITH MY ANTI-VENOM SERUM, BUT WITH LIMITED SUCCESS."
THESE ORGANISMS SHOULD REPEL THE SYMBIOTES. BUT THEIR LIFE SPANS OUTSIDE OF THEIR CONTAINMENT MODULES ARE EXTREMELY FINITE.
HYPOTHETICALLY, THIS COULD ALLOW YOU TO...INFILTRATE THE SYMBIOTE PRISON. BUT YOU ARE LOOKING AT A WINDOW OF ONLY A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE PROTOTYPES BECOME...UNVIABLE.
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU WOULD FIND STRANGE IN THAT MASS.
FOUSH!
I HAVE AN IDEA.
BUT DOC-- BORIS, I MEAN-- YOU'LL HAVE TO CALL UP THAT FRIEND OF YOURS THAT YOU THINK WE DON'T ALL KNOW ABOUT.
WHAT?!
I HAVE NO IDEA TO WHAT YOU ARE REFERRING!

Oh BOY! BACK ON THE CREW!
WELCOME BACK, BABY.
SORRY IF WE GOT YOU INTO TROUBLE LAST TIME.
THE DOC WAS NOT HAPPY.
BUT WE'LL CALL IT SQUARE WHEN WE GET HIM OUT.

NOT A WORD.
DIDN'T SAY NOTHIN'.
IT IS PERFECTLY NORMAL TO HAVE FRIENDS! BATS IS AN EXCELLENT CHESS PLAYER AND HAS MANY FASCINATING INSIGHTS INTO THE WORLD OF THE PARANORMAL.
IT'S FINE, DOC. I'M SURE HE'S MAN'S BEST FRIEND. =Pffftttt=
THERE! YOU SEE? THIS IS WHY I CAN'T TELL YOU PEOPLE ABOUT MY FRIENDS!

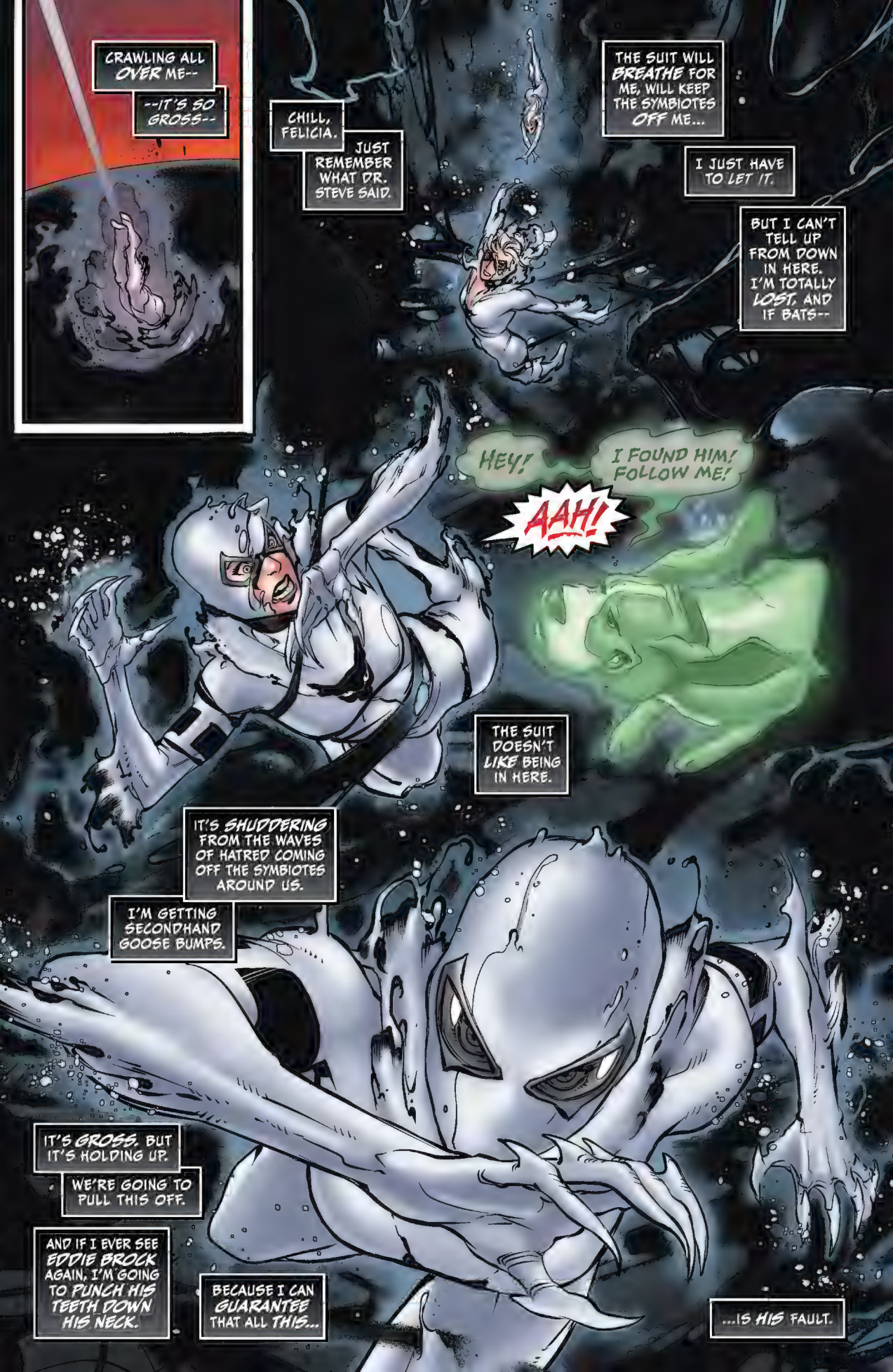
SO YOU WITH ME, BATS?
WHEN WE GET OVER THERE, I NEED YOU TO DO YOUR GHOST THING, PHASE THROUGH THERE AND FIND STRANGE.
YOU LEAD ME TO HIM, AND THEN WE GET HIM OUT.

AND AFTER THAT...ARE YOU SURE THIS GIMMICK WILL JUICE HIM UP? GIVE HIM THE POWER HE'S GOING TO NEED?
I THINK SO.
I MEAN, HE USED IT TO CLOCK LOKI ONE TIME. THERE'S JUST A PIECE LEFT, BUT IT STINKS OF POWER.
GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

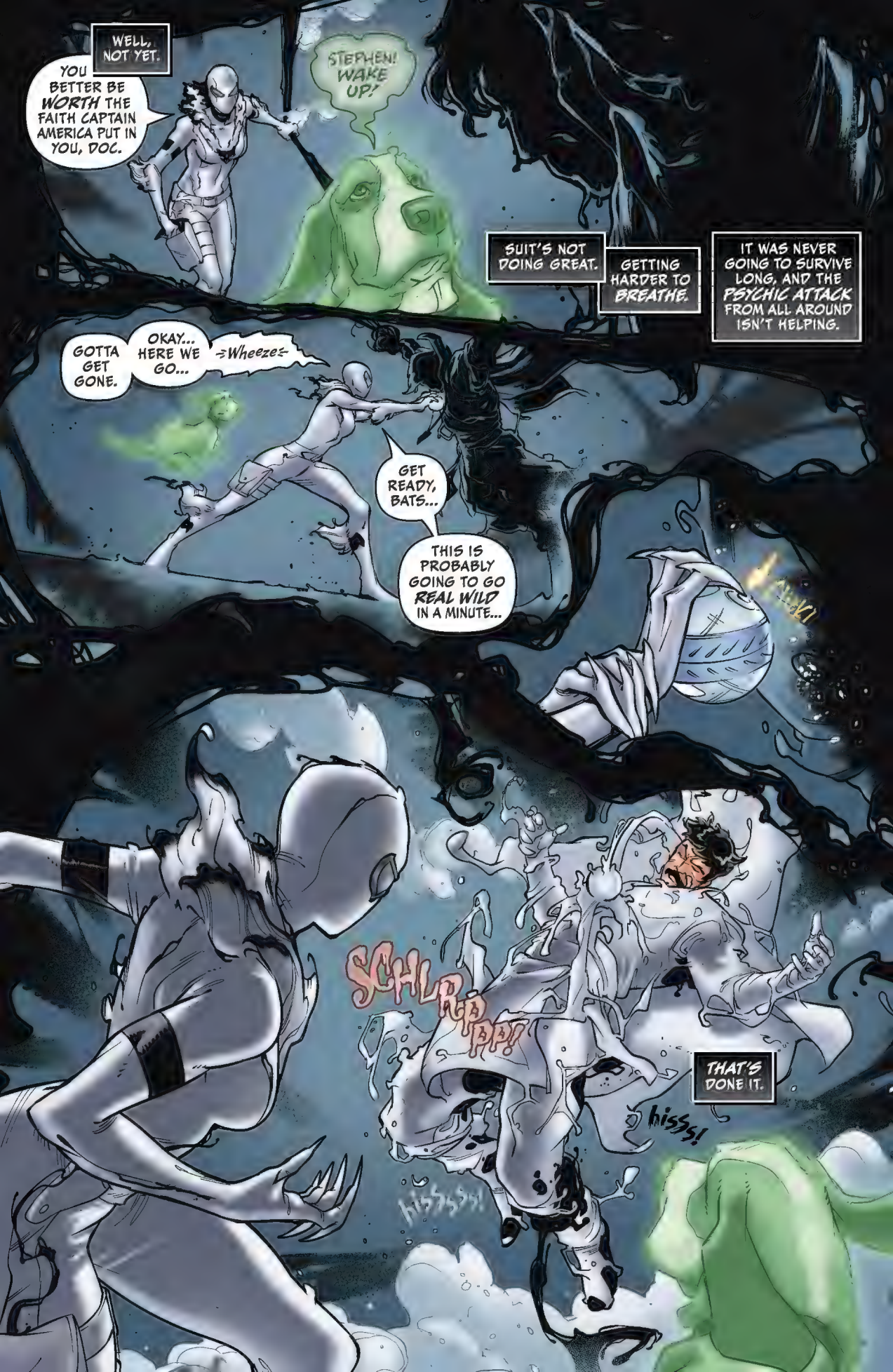
DOC, BRUNO, IS OUR LATEST TOY READY?
GREEN ACROSS THE BOARD, BOSS. IT'S A LITTLE OLD, BUT IT SHOULD HOLD TOGETHER FOR AS LONG AS YOU NEED.
COOL. I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS WAS JUST SITTING THERE AT ALCHEMAX.
DID YOU KNOW...
"...I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO FLY ONE OF THESE THINGS!"
AROOO!

HERE WE GO.
ON ONE OF THE GOBLIN'S OLD RIDES.
A GHOST DOG STRAPPED TO MY CHEST.
COUNTING ON SOME ALIEN GOO TO PROTECT ME FROM A DIFFERENT ALIEN GOO.
BREAKING A WIZARD OUT OF SPACE JAIL.
IF I DIE, AT LEAST IT'LL BE HOW I LIVED.
OUTRAGEOUSLY.
Click!
NOW, TO DRESS FOR THE OCCASION.
FSSHHH!

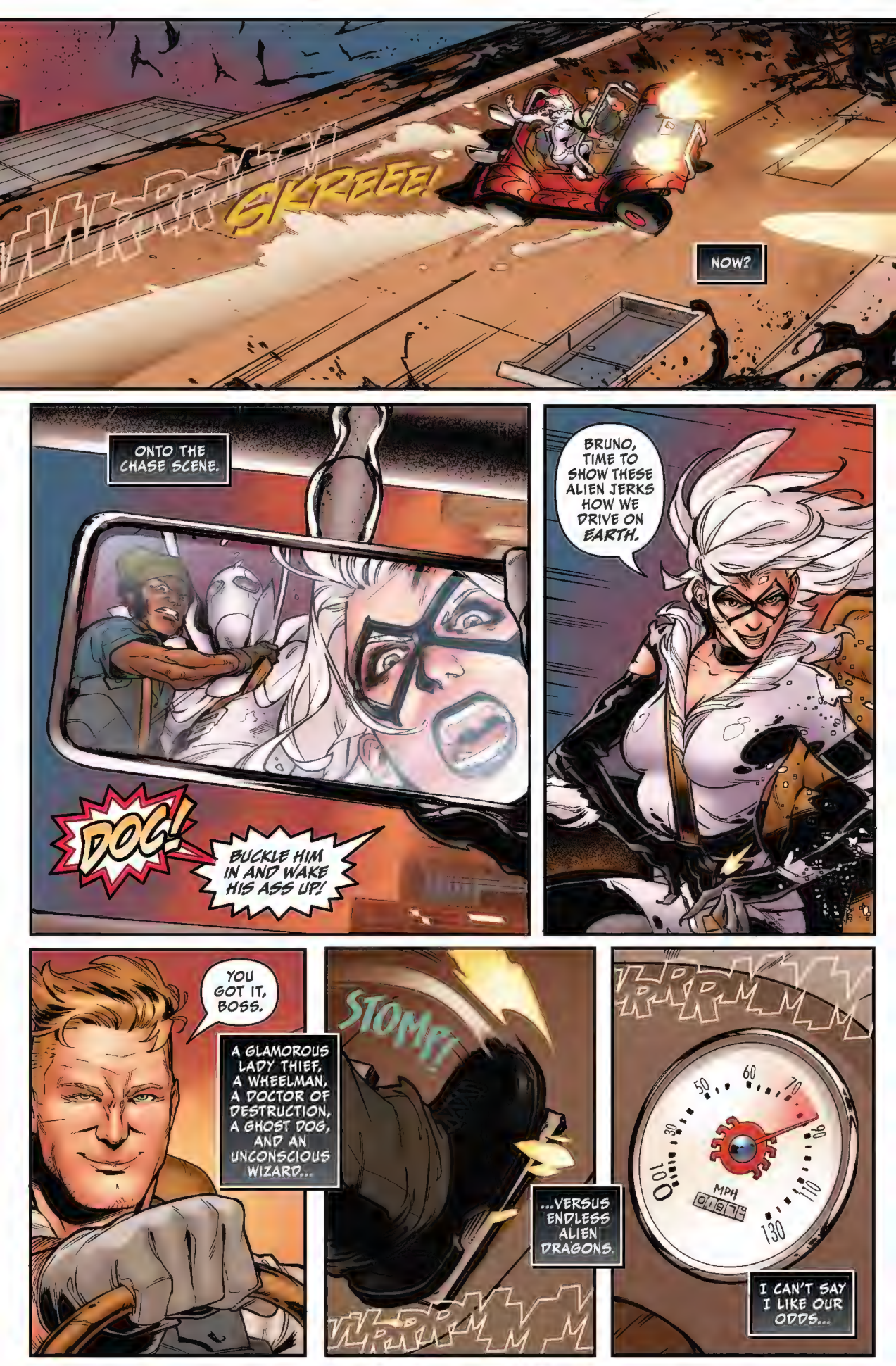
SCHLRPPP!
WHOA!


CRAWLING ALL OVER ME--
--IT'S SO GROSS--
CHILL, FELICIA.
JUST REMEMBER WHAT DR. STEVE SAID.
THE SUIT WILL BREATHE FOR ME, WILL KEEP THE SYMBIOTES OFF ME...
I JUST HAVE TO LET IT.
BUT I CAN'T TELL UP FROM DOWN IN HERE. I'M TOTALLY LOST. AND IF BATS--
HEY!
I FOUND HIM! FOLLOW ME!
AAH!
THE SUIT DOESN'T LIKE BEING IN HERE.
IT'S SHUDDERING FROM THE WAVES OF HATRED COMING OFF THE SYMBIOTES AROUND US.
I'M GETTING SECONDHAND GOOSE BUMPS.
IT'S GROSS. BUT IT'S HOLDING UP.
WE'RE GOING TO PULL THIS OFF.
AND IF I EVER SEE EDDIE BROCK AGAIN, I'M GOING TO PUNCH HIS TEETH DOWN HIS NECK.
BECAUSE I CAN GUARANTEE THAT ALL THIS...
...IS HIS FAULT.

THAT STUPID SUIT.
I HATE IT.
IT'S BEEN NOTHING BUT GRIEF FOR EVERYONE SINCE SPIDER BROUGHT IT HERE FROM WHEREVER HE WENT THAT TIME.
AND I USED TO LIVE WITH THAT THING. THINKING ABOUT IT NOW STILL GIVES ME THE SHUDDERS.
VENOM, CARNAGE, MANIAC...
ALMOST THERE! HURRY!
I'M THE BLACK CAT-- NOT THE BLACK... I DON'T KNOW... BADGER.
I'M GOING AS FAST AS I CAN.
CAN'T BE A COINCIDENCE THAT THESE THINGS END UP WITH STUPID BROKEN LOSERS LIKE BROCK, KASADY AND LEE-DAMNED-PRICE.
THERE'S STRANGE.
THEY'VE GOT HIM TRUSSED UP BUT GOOD. KEEPING HIM FROM SAYING HIS ABRACADABRAS, FROM GESTURING HIS ALAKAZAAMS.
NO ANTI-VENOM SUIT TO KEEP HIM SAFE AND SANE.


WELL, NOT YET.
YOU BETTER BE WORTH THE FAITH CAPTAIN AMERICA PUT IN YOU, DOC.
STEPHEN! WAKE UP!
SUIT'S NOT DOING GREAT.
GETTING HARDER TO BREATHE.
IT WAS NEVER GOING TO SURVIVE LONG, AND THE PSYCHIC ATTACK FROM ALL AROUND ISN'T HELPING.
GOTTA GET GONE.
OKAY... HERE WE GO...
=Wheeze=
GET READY, BATS...
THIS IS PROBABLY GOING TO GO REAL WILD IN A MINUTE...
SCHLRPPP!
THAT'S DONE IT.
hisss!
hisss!

KICKED THE HORNET'S NEST.
BATS!
=Wheeze=
LEAD US--
=Heff=
--OUT OF HERE!
hisssss!
hisss!
THAT'S THE THING ABOUT CRACKING A SAFE THAT'S ALIVE...
WHOAAA!
...IT TENDS TO TAKE IT PERSONAL.
BUT LIKE ANY DATE GONE SOUR, YOU MAKE SURE TO HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY...
WHOOOF!
YO! TAXI!
...PREFERABLY A FAST CAR.
GOTCHA, BOSS!
WHOOO!


SKREEE!
NOW?
ONTO THE CHASE SCENE.
DOC!
BUCKLE HIM IN AND WAKE HIS ASS UP!
BRUNO, TIME TO SHOW THESE ALIEN JERKS HOW WE DRIVE ON EARTH.
YOU GOT IT, BOSS.
A GLAMOROUS LADY THIEF, A WHEELMAN, A DOCTOR OF DESTRUCTION, A GHOST DOG, AND AN UNCONSCIOUS WIZARD...
STOMP!
...VERSUS ENDLESS ALIEN DRAGONS.
VRRRMMM
MPH
I CAN'T SAY I LIKE OUR ODDS...

...BUT THEY'RE THE BEST ONES WE'RE GOING TO GET.
WATCH YOUR EYES!
Clinc!
Clinc!
Clinc!
Clinc!
AND NOTHING EVENS ODDS LIKE DOC'S HOME-COOKED EXPLOSIVES.
FRUSH!
DR. STEVE SAID THEY DON'T LIKE LIGHT.
SO I LIGHT 'EM UP.
HANG ON TIGHT!
AAAAAAAH-!

webs
CLICK!
THWIPP!
THWIPP!
AAAAAAAH--!
WHOOSH!
AAAAAAH!
WHAP!
DOC! I TOLD YOU TO WAKE HIM UP!
I AM NOT A MEDICAL DOCTOR!
I AM A BLOWING-THINGS-UP DOCTOR!
INCOMING!

BTOOM!
BTOOM!
BTOOM!
DAMN IT--
IF HE'S NOT AWAKE, HE CAN'T USE THE THING AND SAVE OUR BUTTS--
--SO THAT MEANS WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO IMPROVISE.
WHICH, GRANTED, IS NORMALLY MY STRONG SUIT.
KRRESH!!
KRUMP!

BUT I HAVE ALIEN STUFF ON ONE SIDE AND MAGIC STUFF ON THE OTHER...
...AND EXCUSE ME IF IT'S BEEN A REALLY LONG NIGHT.
KRASHH!
WAUUP!
WAKE--
--UP--
--YOU--
--CHARLATAN!
SLAP!
DOC! YOU GOTTA WAKE UP!
AND THIS CUTE LITTLE RIG WAS NEVER MEANT TO TAKE THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT.

HOLD ON!
NONE OF US ARE. NOT REALLY.
RUNK!
WE'RE CROOKS.
WHUMP!
WHUMP!
WHUMP!
THIEVES.
WE'RE OUT OF OUR ELEMENT.

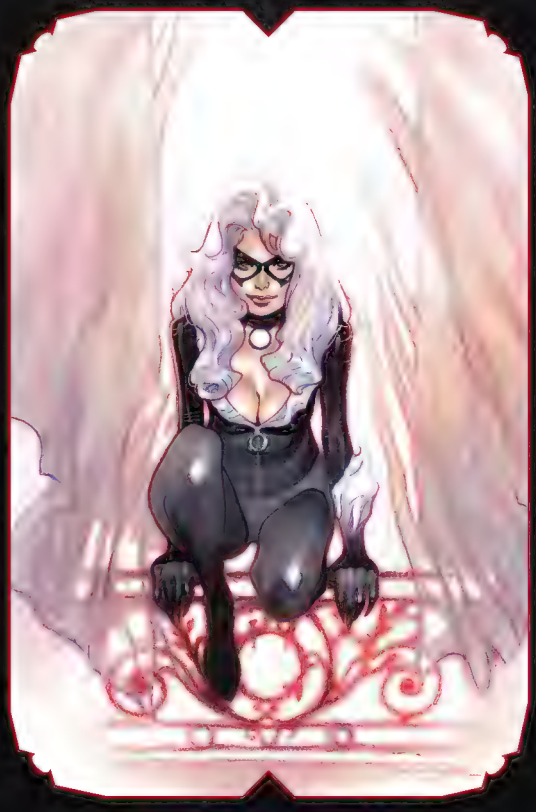
WHRRMM!!
SKREEEEE!
AND IN THIS GAME, WHEN YOU GET OUT OF YOUR ELEMENT, YOU GET DEAD.
SOUND OFF! EVERYONE STILL ALIVE?
BARELY.
OH, AND STRANGE IS STILL ALIVE TOO. FOR NOW.
I'M DEAD.
Heh.
Unnhh...
VRRUH-- vhrrr
VRRUH-- vhrrr
VRRUH-- vhrrr
THE CAR'S BOUGHT IT.
AaaAAAHHhh...
NUTS.
BOYS, I'M NOT GOING TO LIE TO YOU.
IT'S NOT LOOKING GOOD.

AND WE NEVER EVEN GOT TO SEE STRANGE USE HIS MAGIC WAND.
HEY.
WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN IF I TRIED TO USE IT?
OH MAN.
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA.
I'M WITH THE POOCH, BOSS. IT'S TOO RISKY FOR YOU.
HARDY, DON'T YOU DARE--
WE CAN TRY AND SHOOT OUR WAY OUT--
WE CAN'T SHOOT THESE THINGS DOWN, NOT ENOUGH GUN. AND I GOT US INTO THIS.
BATS?
Y-YEAH?

WHERE'D YOU SAY THIS THING CAME FROM?
SCHRAK!
"ASGARD."
BARROOM!
OH.
OH, I SEE.

BLACK CAT #1 HEADSHOT VARIANT BY
TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

BLACK CAT #3 DESIGN VARIANT BY
PEPE LARRAZ



BLACK CAT #2 VARIANT BY
OLIVIER COIPEL

BLACK CAT #2 VARIANT BY
ARIST DEYN

BLACK CAT #3

QUEEN IN BLACK PART 3

Huh?
I GUESS THAT DIDN'T WORK. SO AM I--
--DEAD?
NO, DARLING-- NOTHING SO DRAMATIC.
AAH!

FOX?
WHERE ARE WE? WHAT'S GOING--
I AM NOT THE BLACK FOX.
THIS IS JUST A FAMILIAR SHAPE, ONE WHICH I MIGHT USE TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
OKAY, PAL, WHAT'S THE GAG?
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, AND WHERE ARE MY GUYS?
CALL THIS A... PARTITION OF YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS.
A LITTLE SPACE IN YOUR MIND WHERE WE MIGHT HAVE A... CONVERSATION.
AND AS FOR ME, WELL...
I AM MAGIC.
OLD MAGIC. WILD MAGIC.
OF COURSE YOU ARE.
SO IF I'M IN HERE...
...WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?
IN REALITY?
I WON'T LIE TO YOU, DARLING...

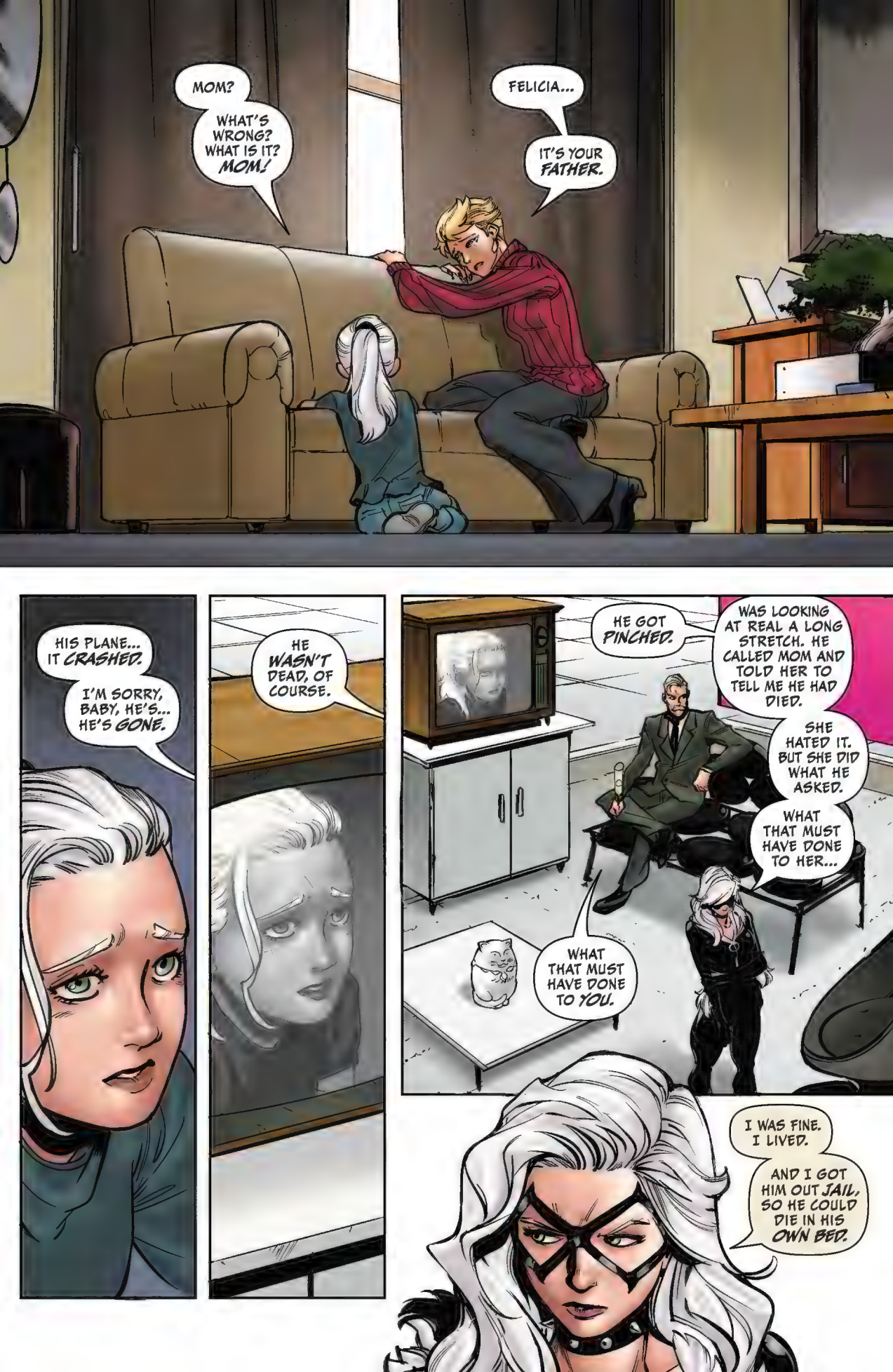
"...IT'S LOOKING BAD."
HARDYY!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE PLAYING AT UP THERE?!
"QUITE BAD."
OH NO.
"OH NO" INDEED.

I NEED TO GET BACK.
HEY!
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME? SEND ME BACK!
NOT UNTIL YOU'VE HEARD WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
AS I SAID BEFORE, I REPRESENT MAGIC. EXTREMELY OLD MAGIC. EXTREMELY WILD MAGIC.
IN TAKING THE FRAGMENT OF YGGDRASIL, YOU EFFECTIVELY GRIPPED A LIVE WIRE. AND THROUGH THAT LIVE WIRE, RUNS MAGIC.
I'LL BITE. SO WHAT DOES MAGIC WANT WITH ME?
I WANT YOU TO SAY YES.
YES?
MAGIC IS GOVERNED BY RULES.
I WANT TO BE FREE, TO BURN BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL AND CARVE MY MARK ACROSS CREATION.
BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT, I REQUIRE A CONDUIT. ONE THAT CAN PROVIDE CONSENT.
OH YEAH?
AND WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME, CHUMLEY?
POWER.
THE POWER OF CREATION ITSELF.
OKAY. SAY I'M INTERESTED.
YOU'VE GOT TO BUY ME DINNER FIRST, SAILOR.
I'M NOT THAT KIND OF GIRL.
YOU MOST ASSUREDLY ARE.

TALK IS CHEAP, BABY-- AND I HAVE EXPENSIVE TASTES.
SO GIVE ME A TASTE.
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
MY GUYS ARE SITTING DUCKS OUT THERE, AND THAT'S ON ME.
THOSE DRAGONS ARE COMING TO PICK US OFF.
I WANT TO PUNISH THEM.
CLICK!
SPLENDID.
SO THIS IS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE.
I'M BACK, BOYS.
A HANDSHAKE WITH A HYDROGEN BOMB.
AND EVERYTHING'S GOING TO BE OKAY.

I'VE GOT ALL THE STARS IN THE UNIVERSE BURNING IN MY BLOOD.
SSSKKKASSSSSSSHH
THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES CRASHING IN MY EARS.
MY KILLING INTENT IS A FORCE OF NATURE. A LAW OF THE UNIVERSE.
WHO COULD SAY NO TO THIS?

WAIT.
HOW AM I OUT THERE, FIGHTING...
...AND ALSO IN HERE, WATCHING IT?
I CAN DO MANY INTERESTING THINGS.
WE CAN DO MANY MORE INTERESTING THINGS TOGETHER.
IF YOU ALLOW IT.
TELL ME, FELICIA...
...WHEN WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU FELT POWERLESS?
MOM?

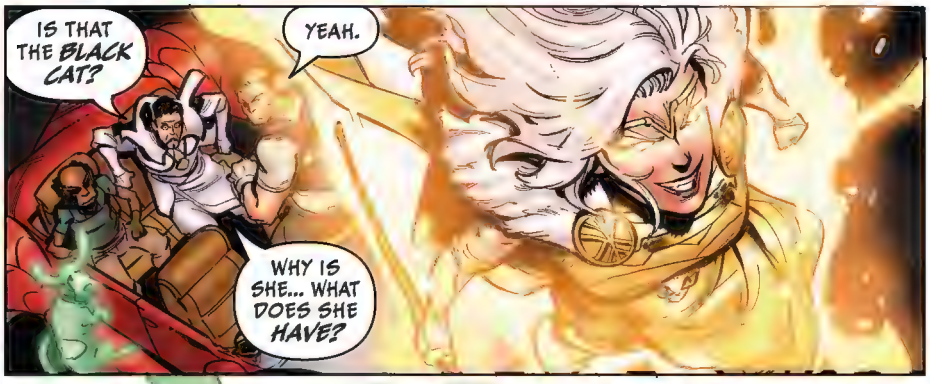

MOM?
WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT IS IT? MOM!
FELICIA...
IT'S YOUR FATHER.
HIS PLANE... IT CRASHED.
I'M SORRY, BABY, HE'S... HE'S GONE.
HE WASN'T DEAD, OF COURSE.
HE GOT PINCHED.
WAS LOOKING AT REAL A LONG STRETCH. HE CALLED MOM AND TOLD HER TO TELL ME HE HAD DIED.
SHE HATED IT. BUT SHE DID WHAT HE ASKED.
WHAT THAT MUST HAVE DONE TO HER...
WHAT THAT MUST HAVE DONE TO YOU.
I WAS FINE. I LIVED.
AND I GOT HIM OUT JAIL, SO HE COULD DIE IN HIS OWN BED.

"YES.
"YOU ALWAYS LIVE, DON'T YOU?
"YOU LIVE, BUT YOU ARE ALWAYS HURT. BADLY HURT.
"LIKE THE GANG WAR BETWEEN THE OWL AND DOCTOR OCTOPUS."
THAT...
THAT WAS A BAD NIGHT.
"IT WAS.
"DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT FELT LIKE? THE POWERLESSNESS?"
"...OF COURSE I DO."
hisssss!

IS THAT ALL?
IS THAT ALL YOU GOT?!

WELL...
IT'S NOT AS BAD AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.
HOW COULD THIS BE ANY WORSE?
I WAS AFRAID SHE'D, LIKE, EXPLODE.

Urgh...
...WHAT... WHAT IS HAPPENING...?
DOC!
FINALLY!

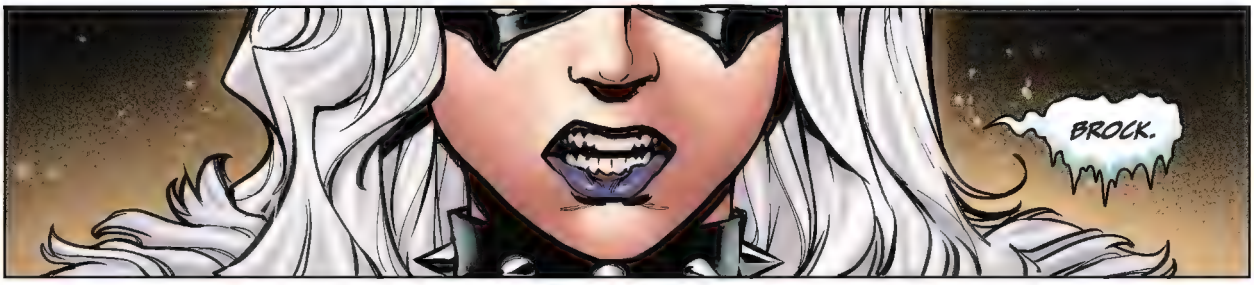

IS THAT THE BLACK CAT?
YEAH.
WHY IS SHE... WHAT DOES SHE HAVE?

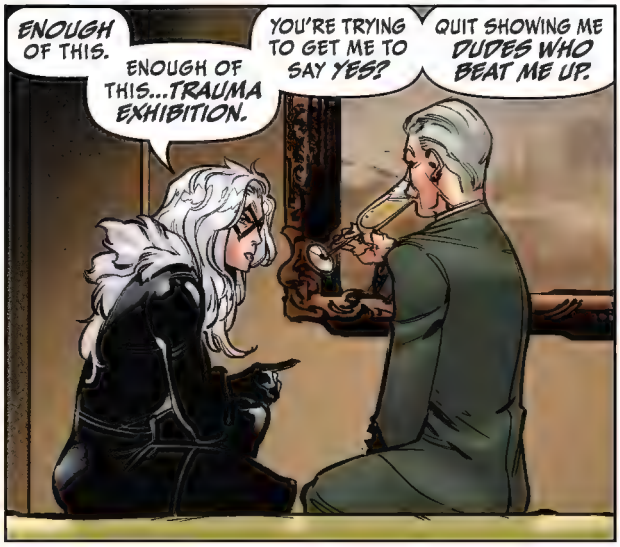
WELL, HERE'S THE THING.
YOU REMEMBER YOUR YGGDRASIL STAFF? HOW THERE WAS STILL A BIT OF IT LEFT?
WE WERE GOING TO BUST YOU OUT OF THE GOO-PRISON, AND I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU COULD USE IT, AND, YOU KNOW, US DOGS ARE ALWAYS FETCHING STICKS...
ANYWAYS, WE KINDA NEEDED A HAIL MARY, AND...

YOU KNEW YOU NEEDED POWER, AFTER THAT.
YOUR LOVER AT THE TIME, SPIDER-MAN, MADE THAT CLEAR.
SO YOU SOUGHT OUT THAT POWER.
ONLY TO MEET WITH DISDAIN AND DISMISSAL.
EXCEPT BY HIM.
THE KINGPIN.

"LOOK, I DIDN'T KNOW..."
"BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER, DID IT? NOT TO SPIDER-MAN."
THIS IS EXTREMELY BAD.
I'LL TAKE IT OFF HER. I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS, SO LONG AS SHE'S OKAY.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.
SHE IS CHANNELING THE RAW POWER OF CREATION, WHICH IS AS UTTERLY AMORAL AND DESTRUCTIVE AS A HURRICANE. AS AN ATOMIC BOMB.
SHE MUST PUT IT DOWN OF HER OWN ACCORD BEFORE SHE IS OVERWHELMED. AND IF SHE IS OVERWHELMED, WELL...
...WE WILL HAVE CREATED A DANGER FAR WORSE THAN WHAT WE WERE FIGHTING BEFORE.
"THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP HER...
"...IS HERSELF.
"AND I PRAY TO ALL THE GODS I'VE EVER KNOWN THAT SHE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO RESIST THE TEMPTATION OF ULTIMATE POWER."
BUT EVEN WITH YOUR NEWFOUND POWER...

...IT JUST WASN'T ENOUGH.


BROCK.


ENOUGH OF THIS.
ENOUGH OF THIS...TRAUMA EXHIBITION.
YOU'RE TRYING TO GET ME TO SAY YES?
QUIT SHOWING ME DUDES WHO BEAT ME UP.

YOU CAN'T BREAK ME DOWN.

THE LADY KNOWS WHAT SHE WANTS!
SO LET'S SHOW HER WHAT SHE CAN HAVE!
WHAT DO YOU SAY, FOLKS?
1
2
3
YEEP!
FIRST OFF, HOW ABOUT...
...THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF HER ENEMIES?
Oh.
Oh.
Oh YES.

BUT IS THAT ENOUGH?
OF COURSE NOT!
WHAT CAN YOU GIVE THE GIRL WHO WANTS EVERYTHING?
WHY...
...EVERYTHING, OF COURSE.
THE WEALTH OF NATIONS. BAUBLES OF COSMIC IMPORT. THE MIGHTIEST HEROES AND VILLAINS, KNEELING AT YOUR FEET.
AND, OF COURSE...
...YOUR FATHER, BROUGHT BACK TO YOU!
YOUR MOTHER, NO LONGER A WIDOW.
Oh.

IS THAT ALL, FOLKS? CAN WE SEND OUR GIRL HOME WITH JUST THAT?
DEATH TO HER ENEMIES? THE TREASURES OF THE UNIVERSE?
SURELY NOT.
SURELY WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT.
LOVE.
EVERY HEART YOU'VE BROKEN, HEALED.
EVERY LOVER WHO LEFT YOU, RETURNED TO YOUR SIDE.
Oh.
Oh NO. NO.
HOW DARE YOU.

YEAARGHH!
YOU MADE A MISTAKE.
nnnnnOO...
I WON'T...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I'M OFFERING YOU EVERYTHING!
THIS IS IT.
THE MOMENT THAT DECIDES IT.
YOU OFFERED ME ASHES.
DID YOU REALLY THINK...
I WOULD n-n-n-NEVER--
...THAT I WOULD MAKE SOMEONE LOVE ME...
...WITH MAGIC?!
SLITCH!

BOSS!
I CANNOT BELIEVE IT...
ARE YOU OKAY?
HARDY!
WHUD!
POC!
FOR A MAGICIAN, SURVIVING THE WILD MAGIC'S TEMPTATIONS WOULD BE ONE THING--
--BUT FOR THE UNINITIATED?
WHAT DID IT OFFER YOU?
EVERYTHING.
MORE THAN MY SOUL COULD TAKE. NOT WITHOUT BECOMING SOMEONE I COULDN'T BEAR BEING.
...
AS LITTLE AS I LIKE TO ADMIT IT, I AM IMPRESSED.
Oh YEAH?
YEAH. I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO KILL US ALL.
IT WAS THIS CLOSE, DOC.
BUT THANKS, I LIKE YOU TOO.

Hmm.
WE ARE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET, IT WOULD APPEAR.
Ahhh...
...NUTS.
HEY.
USE YOUR JUICE. YOUR MAGIC. SEND MY BOYS SOMEWHERE SAFE.
HARDYYY--!
BOSS, NO--!
DONE.
ARE YOU READY?
AS I'M GOING TO BE.
LET'S DO THIS, BABY!

BLACK CAT #2 VARIANT BY
ADAM HUGHES

BLACK CAT #8 VARIANT BY
NABETSE ZITRO & MORRY HOLLOWELL

FANTASTIC FOUR #29 MARVEL MASTERWORKS
300TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT BY
EMA LUPACCHINO & DAVID CURIEL

FANTASTIC FOUR #30 MARVEL
50TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT BY
DANIEL ACUÑA

FANTASTIC FOUR #29

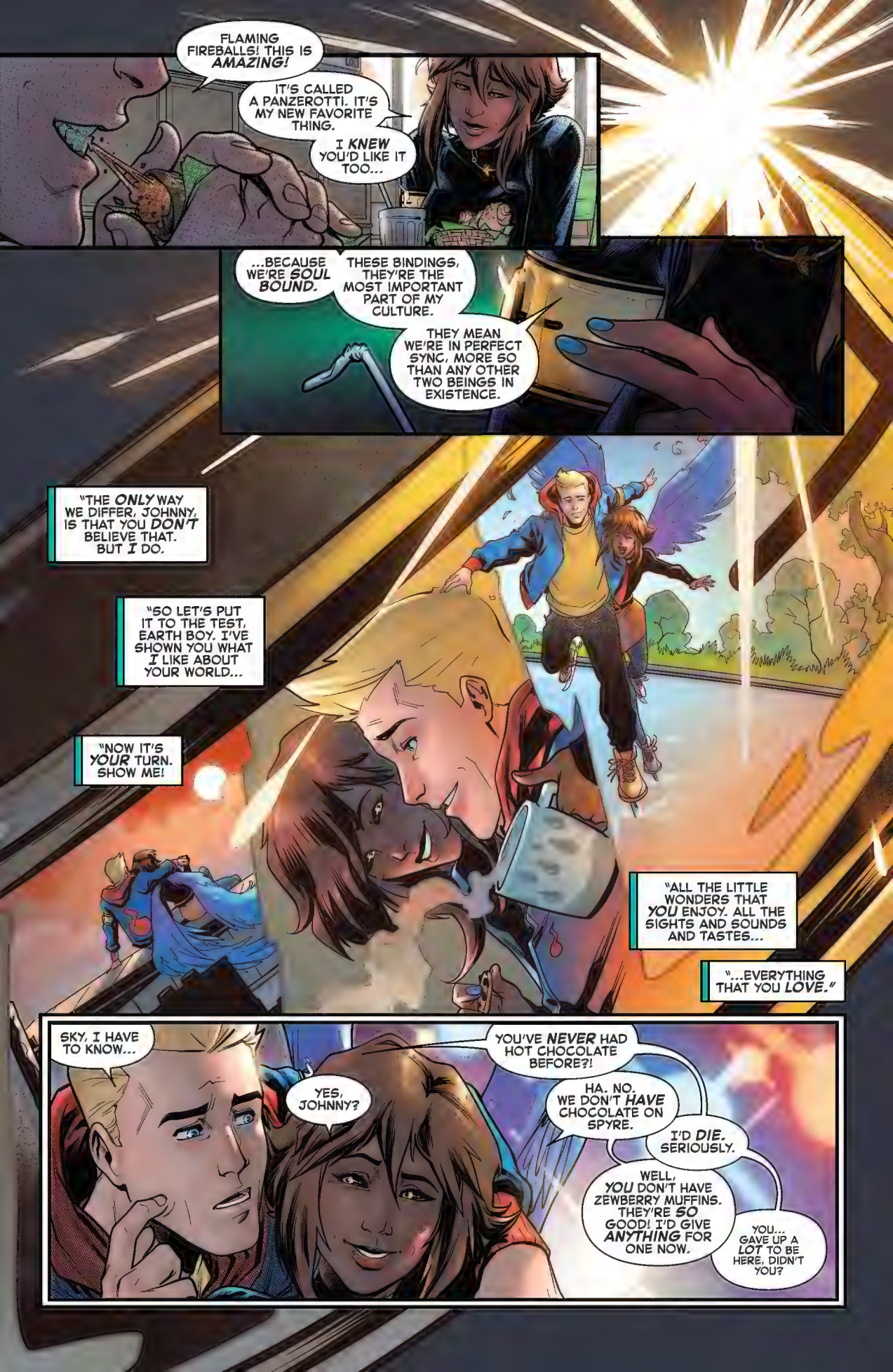
SOUL BOUND

YANCY STREET
EVERYONE, STAY BACK. IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT...
...MY SPATIAL COMPENSATOR WILL DECOMPRESS THE REMAINS OF 4 YANCY STREET AT A PHENOMENAL RATE.
SO IT COULD BE DANGEROUS?
POSSIBLY, NICKI. WE JUST WANT TO BE SAFE.
WE SHOULD WEAPONIZE IT!
NO!
HERE GOES.
TEMM
HEY! IT'S WORKIN'! GOOD. 'CAUSE IT'S KINDA HARD TO GO BACK HOME AND KICK YER FEET UP...
...IF YA AIN'T GOT NO HOME TA GO BACK TO.
NOT SO FAST, BEN.
I WASN'T ABLE TO RESTORE ALL THE EXTRA DIMENSIONS VALERIA AND I FOLDED INTO 4 YANCY STREET.
FLIT
FLOK
FLAP
"THE BEST I COULD DO WAS RESTORE THE OLD GIRL TO HER ORIGINAL SPECIFICATIONS.
"IN FACT, WE WON'T KNOW IF ANYTHING INSIDE HAS SURVIVED UNTIL...
"...WE GO IN AND HAVE A LOOK FOR OURSELVES."
FLIP
FLAT
FPTT

HMM. SO FAR, SO GOOD.
NEVER DOUBTED YOU AND THAT BIG BRAIN OF YOURS FOR A SECOND, REED.
THANK GOODNESS! ALL OUR FAMILY PHOTOS ARE STILL UP ON THE WALLS.
IT ALL LOOKS GOOD TO ME. WHATCHA THINK, SWEETIE?
EVERYTHING FEELS LIKE IT'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE. KIDS, WHAT ABOUT YOUR--
AHHH!
MY ROOM!
MY STUFF! IT'S GONE! ALL OF IT!
JOHNNY. C'MON.
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, SKY! THIS'S MY STUFF WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! I LOVE MY STUFF!
JOHNNY, I'M YOUR SOULMATE. I CAN FEEL HOW MUCH LOSING YOUR POSSESSIONS MEANS TO YOU.
BUT WE CAN BUY YOU NEW THINGS. IN FACT, WHY DON'T WE DO THAT RIGHT NOW?
WE CAN MAKE A DATE OUT OF IT. WHAT DO YOU SAY?
NEW THINGS?
MANY THINGS?
ALL THE THINGS.
BETTER THINGS.
YOU KNOW ME SO WELL.
UGH.

COMPUTER, ARE YOU STILL UP AND RUNNING?
YES, DR. RICHARDS.
RUN A SCAN, PLEASE. IS THIS THE ONLY WORKING FANTASTICAR LEFT IN OUR HANGAR BAY?
AFFIRMATIVE.
BETTER THAN NOTHING, I SUPPOSE. AND THERE'S ENOUGH EQUIPMENT LYING AROUND...
...THAT I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CONSTRUCT A MAKESHIFT LABORATORY.
VALERIA, PLEASE COME IN.
HEY, DAD. HOW ARE THINGS AT 4 YANCY STREET?
VERY PROMISING, VAL, BUT WE ARE LOW ON SUPPLIES. I WAS WONDERING...
...IF YOU HAD ANY EQUIPMENT TO SPARE OVER AT THE BAXTER SITE?
SORRY, POP, BUT WE'RE USING EVERY LAST NUT AND BOLT ON OUR MODS TO THE FOREVER GATE.
THE GOOD NEWS IS, OUR NEW SAFETIES ARE IN PLACE.
THE FF--AND ONLY THE FF--CAN OPEN AND CLOSE THE APERTURE THREE TIMES A MONTH.
GOOD WORK, DEAR.
WISH I COULD TAKE ALL THE CREDIT, BUT IT'S BENTLEY'S DESIGN.
AND IT'S QUITE BRILLIANT.
FROM YOU, THAT'S...QUITE A COMPLIMENT, VAL.
NOT THAT I DON'T DESERVE IT, OF COURSE.

SOHO.
SO THAT'S ONE NEW OUTFIT FOR EACH OF US. GOTTA SAY-- LOOKING GORGEOUS.
BOTH OF US. WE'RE ADORABLE.
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ME OR YOU?
AGREED.
BUT RIGHT NOW, THESE ARE THE ONLY CLOTHES I OWN THAT DON'T HAVE A BIG "4" ON THE CHEST. I NEED MORE.
HEY, SKY!
HI, LUIS.
WHAT'S UP, SKY?
MARTA. JAMAL. MORNING, MRS. HORWITZ.
SKY, MY LAUNDRY LINE FELL DOWN AGAIN. COULD YOU BE AN ANGEL AND...?
I'LL FLY UP AND FIX IT LATER. PROMISE.
HOLD ON. YOU'VE ONLY BEEN ON EARTH A COUPLE WEEKS.
HOW DO YOU KNOW EVERYBODY?
I'VE MADE A LIFE FOR MYSELF HERE. THIS IS MY NEIGHBORHOOD NOW.
AND I'M THEIR LOCAL SUPER HERO. I'VE MADE FRIENDS. I HAVE A JOB--
A JOB? WHEN DID ALL THIS HAPPEN?
YOU KNOW I DON'T CEASE TO EXIST WHEN YOU'RE NOT AROUND, RIGHT? IN FACT...
...THERE MIGHT BE THINGS ON THIS PLANET THAT I KNOW BETTER THAN YOU.
C'MON, I WANT YOU TO TRY SOMETHING.


FLAMING FIREBALLS! THIS IS AMAZING!
IT'S CALLED A PANZEROTTI. IT'S MY NEW FAVORITE THING.
I KNEW YOU'D LIKE IT TOO...
...BECAUSE WE'RE SOUL BOUND.
THESE BINDINGS, THEY'RE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF MY CULTURE.
THEY MEAN WE'RE IN PERFECT SYNC, MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER TWO BEINGS IN EXISTENCE.
"THE ONLY WAY WE DIFFER, JOHNNY, IS THAT YOU DON'T BELIEVE THAT. BUT I DO.
"SO LET'S PUT IT TO THE TEST, EARTH BOY. I'VE SHOWN YOU WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOUR WORLD...
"NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. SHOW ME!
"ALL THE LITTLE WONDERS THAT YOU ENJOY. ALL THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS AND TASTES...
"...EVERYTHING THAT YOU LOVE."
SKY, I HAVE TO KNOW...
YES, JOHNNY?
YOU'VE NEVER HAD HOT CHOCOLATE BEFORE?!
HA. NO. WE DON'T HAVE CHOCOLATE ON SPYRE.
I'D DIE. SERIOUSLY.
WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE ZEWBERRY MUFFINS. THEY'RE SO GOOD! I'D GIVE ANYTHING FOR ONE NOW.
YOU... GAVE UP A LOT TO BE HERE, DIDN'T YOU?

YOU HAD TO SAY GOODBYE TO ALL YOUR FRIENDS, YOUR FAMILY--YOUR BIRDS.
NOT FOREVER. I KNOW I'LL SEE 'EM AGAIN. IN THE MEANTIME...
...I'VE MADE NEW FRIENDS. AND NEW BIRD-FRIENDS. WATCH.
WHEE
TEE
TWEE
THOUGH I BELIEVE YOU CALL THEM "TWITTER FRIENDS."
SKY, THIS IS NOT WHAT "TWEETING" MEANS.
FINE. THEN SHOW ME.
Twee
Twee
Twee
Twee
Twee
I LIKE YOU WAY TOO MUCH FOR THAT.
SO YOU LIKE ME NOW?
WELL, OF COURSE I--
FWUMP
OW!

SUE?! IS THAT YOU?!
YOUR SISTER?
YEAH. IT'S ME. GNHH. ONE SEC.
RIGHT IN THE HEAD. THAT'S GONNA LEAVE A MARK.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WERE YOU SPYING ON US?! THE WHOLE TIME?!
LOOKING AFTER YOU? YEAH, JOHNNY. SOMEONE HAS TO.
BECAUSE THIS WHOLE "SOULMATE" THING--IT'S CRAZY.
IT'S HAPPENING TOO FAST. AND THERE'S NO WAY IT ENDS WELL.
YOU OKAY?
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
YOU'VE HAD IT OUT FOR ME AND SKY SINCE DAY ONE! WHY?!
YOU NEVER SPIED ON ME LIKE THIS WHILE I WAS DATING DORRIE EVANS! OR CRYSTAL! OR FRANKIE RAYE!
NO. I...
...NEVER DID THAT.
THAT YOU KNOW OF.
REALLY?!
JOHNNY! SUSAN! LOOK!
OUTTA MY WAY!
RUN!
NO. WE ARE HAVING THIS TALK RIGHT NOW--
JOHNNY!
FINE, BUT I SWEAR THIS BETTER BE...

...THE END OF THE WORLD.
DRAGONS. IT'S RAINING SPACE DRAGONS!
REED? COME IN! ARE YOU SEEING THIS?!
YES, DEAR. BEN AND I ARE ALREADY ON THE WAY.
TO WHERE EXACTLY?
HERE. I'LL SHOW YOU.
SHOW-OFF. MOST GUYS WOULD JUST SEND A TEXT.
BEN, I CALL MYSELF "MR. FANTASTIC." I'M NOT ONE FOR SUBTLETY.
FWOOSH FWOOSH
GOT 'EM.
DATE'S OVER, JOHNNY. WE'RE NEEDED.
FLAME ON!
SKY, YOU COMING?
I GET THE FEELING I'M NOT INVITED.
I'M INVITING YOU. C'MON.
I'LL CATCH UP. SOMEONE HAS TO STAY HERE AND KEEP MY NEIGHBORHOOD SAFE.

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HAPPENING?
ACCORDING TO CAPTAIN AMERICA, THIS IS A VENOM-RELATED PROBLEM.
A BEING CALLED KNULL, THE ANCIENT GOD OF SYMBIOTES, IS ATTACKING EARTH...
...WITH THESE FLYING BEASTS.
WHOA! THEY'RE NOT JUST SPACE DRAGONS...
...THEY'RE VENOM-SYMBIOTE-DRAGONS!
SKY WOULD TOTALLY BE USEFUL RIGHT NOW. SHE CAN TALK TO FLYING THINGS.
BIRDS, JOHNNY. SHE TALKS TO BIRDS.
I'VE SEEN HER TALK TO DINOSAURS.
PIPE DOWN, YOU TWO! DON'T YOU SEE WHAT'S HAPPENIN' HERE?
WE GOT AN ALL-HANDS-ON-DECK SITUATION!
SO PUT YER GAME FACES ON--IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

GUYS, WHY ISN'T MY FIRE WORKING?!
I'VE FOUGHT SYMBIOTES BEFORE! THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO HATE FIRE! THAT'S THE RULE!
LOOKS LIKE THE RULES HAVE CHANGED!
ANY BRIGHT IDEAS, BIG BRAIN?
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT. WE MIGHT NEED TO PULL BACK.
BAXTER SITE, COME IN!

FRANKLIN?
DAD, IT'S NUTS OVER HERE! WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

GET YOUR SISTER AND BENTLEY, AND KEEP YOUR HEADS DOWN.
TELL DRAGON MAN THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS, HE HAS TO GUARD THE FOREVER GATE AT ALL COS--SKKZZ--
DAD, YOU'RE BREAKING UP!

KNULL IS ERECTING A SYMBIOTE-SHIELD--STZZZ--ROUND EARTH!
WHAT?!
HOLD THE FOREVER GATE--FTZZZ--ONLY WAY TO EVACUATE--TSZZ----URVIVORS! SON, DO YOU COP--YTZXX--
OH MAN.

I'M ON MY WAY!
DAD, VAL AND I ARE ON TOP OF THIS. I PROMISE!
ALL RIGHT, SON. YOU TWO ARE ALL GROWN UP NOW. I KNOW YOU CAN HANDLE YOURSELVES. I TRUST YOU.
BUT STILL... I NEED TO GO WHERE I CAN DO THE MOST GOOD.
BEN! SUE! JOHNNY! KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS HERE. I'LL BE IN THE LAB!
IS HE FOR REAL, MR. GRIMM? WE COULD SURE USE HIM RIGHT HERE!
NAH! HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING, MS. MARVEL! WAIT AND SEE!
BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, REED'LL WHIP UP SOME DOOHICKEY THAT'LL FIX EVERYTHING!
STILL, I WOULDN'T SAY NO TO SOME MORE BACKUP!
COPY THAT! REINFORCEMENTS ARE ON THE WAY!
JO?! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' ON THIS LINE!
MONITORING THE BATTLE! NICK! AND I WILL BE RIGHT OVER!
DON'T YOU DARE!--TZZZ-- GOT A WAY MORE IMPORTANT JOB FER YA!
YOU TWO STAY WITH ALICIA!--SKZZZ-- KEEP YER MA SAFE!
THAT'S AN ORDER, KIDDO!
YOU SURE, COMMANDER?
YEAH. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
WE GOT EVERYTHING UNDER... CONTROL.
OY.

*WANT TO HEAR WHAT SPIDEY & THE TORCH WERE SAYING? CHECK OUT KING IN BLACK #2. --TIE-IN TOM

WATCH OUT! DON'T LET IT TOUCH YOU!
--GIVE YOU ENOUGH TIME TO GET OUT OF HERE! GO!
GNHH!
JOHNNY?
DON'T SEE HIM ANYWHERE.
JOHNNY, COME IN? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
JOHNNY!
TSSSS--

SUSAN! I CAME AS SOON AS I COULD!
WHERE'S JOHNNY?
I--I DON'T KNOW. OUR COMMS ARE DOWN.
I LOST TRACK OF HIM.
REED'S SETTING UP HOME BASE AT HIS LAB. JOHNNY MENTIONED IT TO SPIDER-MAN. I'M HOPING THEY BOTH WENT THERE.
THE SMART PLAY IS TO REGROUP. YOU SHOULD COME, SKY. WE COULD USE YOU.
NO! YOU'RE WRONG. YOUR BROTHER'S STILL DOWN THERE SOMEWHERE!
I CAN FEEL IT!
WE SHARE A SACRED BOND. IT DREW ME HERE.
HE'S... COLD. HURT. STRUGGLING.
DARKNESS ALL AROUND HIM. AND...
...HE'S ALONE. ALL ALONE.
STOP IT, SKY! I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS NONSENSE RIGHT NOW!
YOU DON'T HAVE A MAGIC LOVE-BOND WITH MY BROTHER. YOU HAVE AN ALIEN BRACELET. THAT'S IT.
IF YOU WANT TO HELP HIM, HERE IN THE REAL WORLD, YOU'LL COME WITH ME.

"THAT'S NOT TRUE. WHEREVER HE IS..."

...WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER!

"I FEEL WHAT *HE* FEELS..."

...WE ARE ONE HEART, AND WE--WE SHARE *EVERYTHING!*
SKY?

HA HA HA!

HA HA HA! AND NOW WE BOTH BELONG--
--TO THE GREAT GOD, KNULL!
OH MY STARS!

YOU KNOW WHAT OUR PROBLEM IS, SUB? WE HAVEN'T SPENT ENOUGH TIME TOGETHER.
C'MON, LET'S DO SOME BONDING!
OKAY, I WAS A LITTLE HARSH BACK THERE.
AND WHEN YOU'RE BACK TO NORMAL, I AM TOTALLY GOING TO APOLOGIZE, BUT FOR NOW...
...I'M OUTTA HERE.
YOU'RE GHOSTING ME? REALLY?
NO. YOU'RE TAKING THIS CALL.
SKREEEEEE
MMPH!

TELL ME, SUSAN, WHAT HURTS MORE?
SPLUPCH
THAT YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT HOW ENTWINED I AM WITH JOHNNY?
OR THAT YOU LEFT YOUR BROTHER--TO A FATE LIKE THIS?
SKY...
SWEETIE, DO ME A FAVOR AND...
MM--
ZIP IT!
WHEE TEE TWEE

HRRSSSS!
HUH. SHE CAN TALK TO THEM. JOHNNY WAS RIGHT.
SO...NOW I'M FACING HIS DEMONIC GIRLFRIEND...
...AND A HUNDRED SYMBIOTE-DRAGONS.
WHAT DO I DO AGAINST THAT? EVEN JOHNNY'S FLAME COULDN'T STOP THEM...
...BUT HIS NOVA BURST--
AH! GOT IT!

POOR SUSAN. IS THAT ALL YOU CAN DO? CALL FOR HELP?
FASH
NO. THIS IS MY BRIGHT IDEA!
GYAH!
CLEVER. AND COWARDLY.
THAT'S ALL YOU'RE GOOD FOR, ISN'T IT, SUSAN? RUNNING AWAY AND HIDING!
BUT DON'T WORRY. WE'LL FIND YOU! AND SOON, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU, ME, JOHNNY...
...WE'LL ALL BE ONE FAMILY, BONDED TOGETHER-- UNDER KNULL!

4 YANCY ST.
SUSAN! DEAR, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
BEN AND JOHNNY? ARE THEY...?
I LOST THEM, REED.
AND SKY.
ARE THE CHILDREN...?
I CHECKED IN. THEY'RE FINE.
THANK GOODNESS. I WAS WRONG TODAY. ABOUT SO MANY THINGS.
NOW JOHNNY'S ONE OF THEM. HIS GIRLFRIEND TOO.
I HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT BEN. I COULDN'T REACH HIM--YOU--ANYONE.
THAT'S WHY I'M UP HERE. I WAS INSTALLING A SIGNAL ENHANCER ON THE ROOF.
TRYING TO BOOST OUR COMM SIGNAL--
YO, MATCHSTICK! SUZIE! STRETCHO! ANYBODY OUT THERE?
BEN! YOU'RE OKAY?
YEAH! IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN A BUNCH OF BLACK GOOP TO CLEAN MY CLOCK!
SO WHAT'S UP? WHERE ARE YOU GUYS?
BACK AT 4 YANCY STREET. AND WE COULD REALLY USE YOUR HELP TO HOLD DOWN THE FORT.
SURE THING. I'LL BE RIGHT OVER.

FANTASTIC FOUR #30

FRIENDS & ENEMIES

4 YANCY STREET.
WHEN THE ENTIRE WORLD IS UNDER ATTACK, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR IS ALWAYS PROUD TO SERVE...
...AS THE BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR ALL THE HEROES OF EARTH.
KRASH
HSSSS!
THERE'S ONE PROBLEM WITH THAT. THIS ISN'T JUST OUR HEADQUARTERS.
IT'S ALSO HOME TO ALL OF OUR EXTENDED FAMILY.
WHO--WHO'S THERE? SAY SOMETHING!
STAND BACK, ALICIA!
WE'VE GOT THIS, MOM!
BY HALA, I SWEAR YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS INTRUSION!
WRARR!
SLIKKT
THWAK
KRNCH
JO? NICKI? WHAT'S GOING ON?
KIDS? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO THEM?
SNAP
SPLUTCH
AND IT'S PROBABLY NOT THE BEST PLACE TO RAISE CHILDREN.

TRUST ME. MY NAME'S SUE STORM.
AND I KNOW THIS FROM YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.
ALICIA? KIDS? ARE YOU OKAY? I THOUGHT I HEARD...
OH MY.
UNNHH...
ALL OF YOU--
--GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!
SUE, THOSE PEOPLE, PLEASE TELL ME THEY'RE STILL ALIVE?
THEY'VE BEEN KNULLIFIED, ALICIA.
OUTSIDE OF ELECTRICITY AND BLINDING LIGHT, THEY'RE DARN NEAR INVULNERABLE.
TEP TAP
KLANG
DON'T WORRY. THEY'LL BE FINE.

CHILDREN, LISTEN TO ME. THIS HAS TO STOP.
IN OUR FAMILY, WE DON'T DO THESE THINGS.
EVER SINCE YOU BROUGHT US HERE, IT'S ALL WE'VE DONE!
WE'VE BATTLED THE DARK HARVEST, THE GRIEVER AND NOW THESE CREATURES!
AND IT HAS BEEN GLORIOUS!

YOU'RE NOT SOLDIERS ANYMORE. WE'RE TRAVELERS, SCIENTISTS...
CLOBBERERS!
LEAVE THE CLOBBERING TO YOUR FATHER.
SUE, YOU SAID BEN WILL BE HOME SOON?
HE'S ONLY A FEW BLOCKS OUT. AND HE'S WITH...
...JOHNNY? THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.
REED, COME IN! ARE YOU DOWN IN THE LAB?
YES, DEAR. I'M HERE WITH SPIDER-MAN.
WE'RE WORKING ON A WAY TO REPEL KNULL'S FORCES. WHAT'S UP?
I'M TRACKING BEN AND JOHNNY. THEY'RE BOTH ON THEIR WAY HERE.
HOW CAN THAT BE? I KNOW MY BROTHER'S BEEN KNULLIFIED.* BUT WE JUST TALKED TO BEN, AND HE'S ALL RIGHT.
NO, HE'S NOT! SUE, THIS IS SPIDEY. I'VE SEEN THE THING OUT IN THE STREETS. HE'S BEEN TURNED!
WHATEVER'S GOING DOWN, KNULL'S PLAYING YOU.
*SEE LAST ISSUE. --TOM
BEN KNOWS ALL OF OUR SECURITY MEASURES. THROUGH HIM, KNULL COULD TAKE OUT THIS ENTIRE COMMAND CENTER.
READY OR NOT, THIS NEW DEFENSE SYSTEM HAS TO GO UP! PETER, CAN YOU KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS HERE?
YEAH, BUT HURRY BACK, OKAY? WE NEED EVERYONE ON THIS ONE!
UNDERSTOOD. SUE, I COULD USE YOUR HELP.
THIS EMERGENCY EXIT TO THE SIX SUBWAY LINE IS THE ONE WEAK SPOT IN OUR DEFENSE GRID.
A STRONG ELECTRICAL BARRIER SHOULD SHORE THAT UP.
"COMMAND CENTER"? "DEFENSE GRID"?
ALICIA'S RIGHT. THIS ISN'T WHAT THE FF'S ALL ABOUT.
WE SHOULD BE OUT THERE SEEING NEW THINGS AND EXPLORING STRANGE NEW WORLDS.

THAT'S TRUE, DEAR, BUT FOR NOW, OUR WORLD NEEDS US.
AND TWO OF OUR GREATEST ENEMIES ARE ON THEIR WAY.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MY BROTHER AND YOUR BEST FRIEND.
YES, I AM...
"...THE TWO PEOPLE IN ALL THE WORLD...
"...WHO KNOW THE BEST WAYS TO HURT US."

THE FOREVER GATE.
BAXTER SITE, COME IN. CAN YOU GIVE US A STATUS REPORT? COPY?
MOM? WE'RE HERE. WE'VE TAKEN COVER. AND DRAGON MAN'S DOING WHAT HE CAN TO GUARD THE GATE--
WE SHOULD HELP HIM!
NO! WAS THAT BENTLEY? DO NOT DO THAT! IN FACT, PULL BACK. AND STAY CLEAR OF ANY OF THAT BLACK GOO!
BUT I'VE GOT THE CONTROLS TO THE FOREVER GATE!
WE COULD USE IT TO EVACUATE PEOPLE. OR CALL IN REINFORCEMENTS.
AND I'VE RECONFIGURED MY WEAPON FOR ELECTRICAL BLASTS!
I CAN TAKE SOME OF THESE CREATURES OUT!
ALL OF YOU, LISTEN TO ME. THAT GOO HAS TURNED OUR FRIENDS AGAINST US.
INCLUDING YOUR UNCLE BEN AND UNCLE JOHNNY! KEEPING AWAY FROM IT IS ALL THAT MATTERS NOW!
MOM, YOU'RE WRONG! AS LONG AS WE HAVE THE GATE, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE HERE!
FRANKLIN! VAL! DO AS YOUR MOTHER SAYS!
BENTLEY, GO WITH THEM. THERE IS NO MORE WE CAN DO HERE THIS DAY.
WE ARE OUTNUMBERED, NOT JUST BY OUR FOES...

...BUT BY OUR FORMER ALLIES AS WELL!
BY ORDER OF LORD KNULL, THIS GATE IS OURS!
THERE SHALL BE NO ESCAPE FOR ANY OF YOU! FOR ANYONE ON THE PATHETIC WORLD!
RUN, CHILDREN! I'LL FOLLOW WHEN I CAN!
NO, YOU WON'T! FOR I AM SKY, AND I CONTROL EVERY CREATURE IN THE AIR!
INCLUDING YOU!
SKREEE!
VAL? WHAT'RE YOU TYPING? YOU'VE FIGURED IT OUT, HAVEN'T YOU?
SOME CLEVER WAY TO USE THE GATE TO--
TO SHUT IT DOWN. NO ONE'S GOING ANYWHERE, EXCEPT...
...INTO THE DARK EMBRACE OF KNULL!
GYAH!

VALERIA, DON'T! YOU KNOW ME.
I AM A BEING OF PURE LOGIC AND REASON.
AND I WILL NOT HESITATE FOR ONE SEC--
BENTLEY!
AHH!
WHAK
IDIOT!
ALL RIGHT, WHATEVER YOU ARE, LET GO OF MY SISTER, OR I'LL--
OR YOU'LL WHAT?! WHAT CAN YOU DO, BROTHER?
YOU'RE THE MOST USELESS MEMBER OF THE FF.
NO POWERS. NO SMARTS. WE ONLY KEEP YOU AROUND OUT OF PITY.
YOU'RE ONE BIG, FAT NOTHING! AND EVEN YOU KNOW IT!

NOW GO, DRAGON MAN. DO MY BIDDING...
...AND GATHER UP THE CHILDREN.
YES, MISTRESS. BUT FIRST, I MUST INFORM YOU...
...I AM NEITHER DRAGON, MAN, NOR CREATURE OF THE AIR.
KTAM
I'M AN ANDROID.
YOU REALLY THINK THAT ABOUT ME, DON'T YOU?
JUST NEEDED SOME BLACK GOO IN YOU TO COME OUT AND SAY IT.
THANKS! YOU JUST GAVE ME MY SUPER-POWER!
'CAUSE WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOTHING--
--YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!
ZZRAK
HEY! ALL OF YOU, I'M RIGHT HERE! BRING IT!
I GOT A LIGHTNING GUN AND NOTHING BETTER TO DO TODAY! C'MON!
ZKOW
UNHH...
"THE KIDS WILL BE ALL RIGHT..."

...WON'T THEY, REED?
DON'T WORRY, SUE. THEY'RE RESOURCEFUL AND THEY'LL LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER.
IT'S WHAT OUR FAMILY DOES BEST. SEE? LOOK AT US. WE'RE JUST ABOUT FINISHED HERE...
FTOOM
KNOCK, KNOCK.
I THINK THEY WERE EXPECTING US.
A REGULAR WARM WELCOME.
WHY DON'TCHA RETURN THE FAVOR?
JOHNNY, DON'T!
MY BIG SIS TELLING ME WHAT TO DO. TYPICAL.

UMFF!
JOHNNY! BEN! STAND BACK. WE DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU.
THE FEELING AIN'T MUTUAL, PAL.
FAIR ENOUGH. I DID WARN YOU.
REED, WAIT!
THE FF FLARE AS A WEAPON. NICE. BUT NOTHING I CAN'T ABSORB.
I TRIED THAT ON SKY EARLIER. SINCE SHE AND JOHNNY ARE BONDED...
...HE KNEW ALL ABOUT IT. THAT TRICK WON'T WORK TWICE.

SO MUCH FOR THE BRAINS OF THE OUTFIT, HUH? "MISTER FANTASTIC"? HA!
EVER SINCE YOU CAME BACK...
...IT'S BEEN MORE LIKE "MISTER PATHETIC!"
TOOM
C'MON, TELL ME. WHO HASN'T BEEN GETTIN' THE BEST OF YOU LATELY?!
THE GRIEVER! DOOM! THE CORMORANT! AND NOW KNULL!
YOU BEEN OFF YOUR GAME, RICHARDS! HOW LONG WILL IT BE...
WAKK
...UNTIL THAT GETS ONE OF US KILLED?! NOT THAT YOU'D CARE!
WHAT?! UNHH--
YOU DON'T MEAN THAT! EITHER OF YOU!
WHOEVER THIS KNULL IS-- THAT'S HIM TALKING.
WRONG! THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE THINK, SUE!
THESE ARE JUST ALL THE LITTLE DARK THOUGHTS WE LIKE TO KEEP HIDDEN AWAY.
WANNA KNOW HOW I REALLY FEEL ABOUT YOU?!
WHAT A SHOCK. SHE DISAPPEARED. BUT WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE STILL HERE.
MY BIG SISTER. ALWAYS KEEPING AN EYE ON ME.
IT'S BEEN THAT WAY SINCE OUR PARENTS PULLED THEIR VANISHING ACT.
'CAUSE, LET'S BE HONEST, THE MOMENT THAT HAPPENED, YOU STOPPED BEING MY SISTER.
...AND TRIED TO BE MY MOM. AND I HAVE TO TELL YOU...YOU WERE ONE LOUSY MOTHER.

PLEASE, OLD FRIEND. YOU HAVE TO FIGHT THIS, BEFORE--
BEFORE WHAT? BEFORE I SAY SUMTHIN' I CAN'T TAKE BACK? TOUGH. TRUTH HURTS, "OLD FRIEND."
HA! THAT'S THE BIGGEST LIE OF 'EM ALL.
YOU DON'T GIVE JACK SQUAT ABOUT FRIENDS OR FAMILY. WE'RE ALL A DISTANT SECOND--
--TO SCIENCE! TO WHATEVER'S OUT THERE!
YOU'D RISK ALL OF US TO KEEP GOIN' INTA THE UNKNOWN!
YOU DIDN'T STOP AFTER IT TURNED US INTO FREAKS!
AND YOU'LL KEEP GOING UNTIL IT PUTS ONE OF US INTA THE GROUND!
ENOUGH!
YOU RAISED ME. AND I TURNED OUT TO BE A TOTAL SCREWUP.
BUT MAYBE THERE'S STILL TIME TO FIX THAT.
MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP...TRACK OF MY EVERY MOVE.
HA HA HA! THERE YOU ARE!
C'MON, "MOM." TELL ME I'M WRONG.
WOOSH!

KNULL, OR WHOEVER YOU ARE, I'M NOT FALLING FOR THIS. BEN GRIMM, THE *REAL* BEN GRIMM, WOULD NEVER--

WOULD NEVER *WHAT?* REED, WE'VE BOTH SEEN INTO THE FUTURE. WE KNOW WHAT'S COMIN'!

SOME DAY YER GONNA DO SOMETHIN' SO WRONG...

...THAT I'M GONNA KILL YOU FOR IT! AND YOU'LL *DESERVE* IT!*

AN' THERE AIN'T NO STOPPING THA--

YARGHH!

ZRKZZ

*A FUTURE WE WITNESSED IN *FF* #28. --TOM

WRONG, OLD FRIEND! THERE'S ALWAYS A WAY. AND I'LL ALWAYS FIND IT.

SUSAN, ELECTRICITY AND BRIGHT LIGHTS. THAT WILL STALL THEM UNTIL--

DARLING, NO NEED TO TELL ME HOW TO FIGHT MY OWN BROTHER. BEEN DOING IT FOR YEARS.

AND FAILING, 'CAUSE THAT'S WHAT I AM, SUE. YOUR *FIRST* PARENTING FAIL. AND NOW...

...YOU'RE ON TO THE *NEXT* GENERATION. I MEAN, HAVE YOU *SEEN* HOW MESSED UP YOUR *KIDS* ARE?

KPAM

I KNOW.

UNHH...

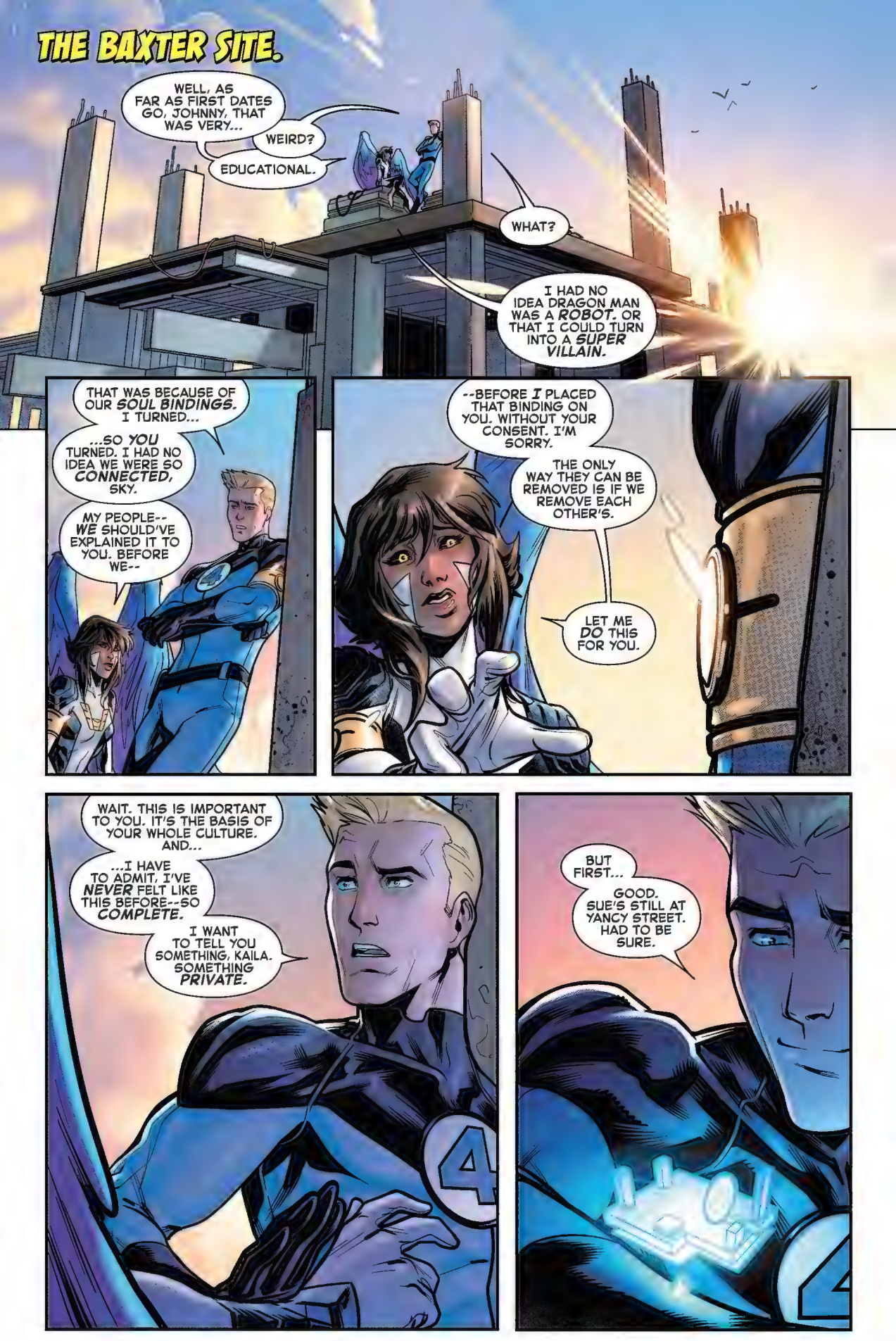
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO KEEP YOU *ALL* SAFE.

COME ON, REED. WE'RE DONE HERE.
KLIK
HEY, WAIT UP!
WHAT? YER NOT LETTIN' US IN?
I THOUGHT WE WUZ FAMILY.
YOU'RE NO LONGER WELCOME HERE.
NOT TODAY.
HA! WAS IT SOMETHING WE SAID?
SLAMMM
IT WAS WORTH A SHOT.
WE'VE DONE ALL THE DAMAGE WE COULD HERE.
BACK TO THE BATTLE--AND WHATEVER LORD KNULL NEEDS.*
*SEE THE WRAP-UP IN KING IN BLACK #5, ON SALE NOW! --TOM

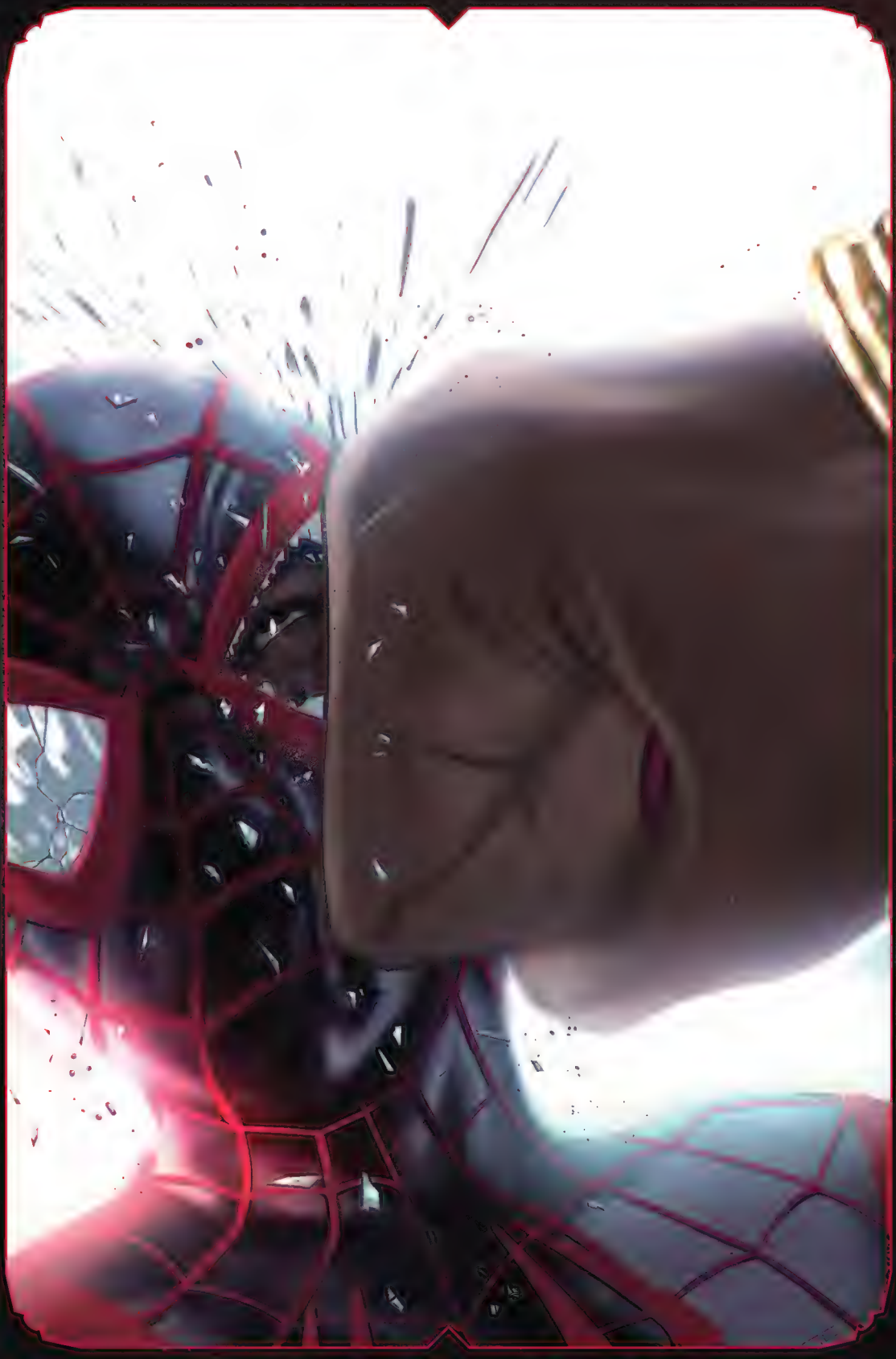
DAYS LATER...
POOR YANCY STREET. SHE NEVER SEEMS TO CATCH A BREAK, DOES SHE? I'M SORRY, MR. SHECKERBERG.
FOR WHAT? REED, THE WHOLE WORLD WAS UNDER ATTACK. WHY SHOULD WE BE ANY DIFFERENT?
I'D STILL LIKE TO HELP.
NAH. YOU AND YOUR SUPER-FRIENDS, YOU DID THE HARD PART. WE GOT THIS.
Yancy St.
THANKS, HIRAM. HAVE YOU SEEN BEN?
HE'S OVER AT THE BAR.
BEN...?
I WAS HOPING WE COULD TALK.
I'M... UH...KINDA BUSY.
CAN'T YA SEE I'M GIVIN' TERRI A HAND HERE?
KAVANAG
PLEASE, GRIMM. IF ANYTHING, YOU'RE SLOWIN' ME DOWN.
WHY DON'TCHA GO INSIDE AND GET YOUR FRIEND A DRINK? IT'S ON ME.
...
GREAT. HOW CAN I SAY NO TO THAT?

...FREED FROM ALL OUTSIDE INFLUENCE, THE HEROES OF EARTH ONCE AGAIN JOINED FORCES...
CNN
SAVING THE DAY!
...TO SUCCESSFULLY REPEL THE ALIEN INVASION.
SO, THE OTHER DAY, DOWN IN THE TUNNELS...
...ALL THAT STUFF I SAID...
...THAT WAS MY DARK SIDE. I DIDN'T MEAN ANY OF IT.
BEN, I'VE KNOWN YOU LONG ENOUGH...
...TO KNOW DEEP DOWN, YOU MEANT EVERY SINGLE WORD.
YEAH. IT WAS PRETTY UNFORGIVABLE, HUH?
THE TWO OF US, WE'VE TRAVELED TO THE ENDS OF THE UNIVERSE TOGETHER.
TO MULTIPLE UNIVERSES.
CAN YOU IMAGINE ANY WORLD WHERE I WOULDN'T FORGIVE YOU?
NOT A ONE.

4 YANCY ST.
HAVE YOU SEEN BENTLEY? I SO HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO HIM.
TO HIM?
JO, I HEAR TELL YOU AND NICKI FOUGHT OFF AN ENTIRE REGIMENT OF KNULL'S MINIONS!
YES. OUR NEIGHBORS. WHO ARE ALL STILL ALIVE!
IT WAS NOTHING. YOU AND FRANKLIN HELD OFF A WAVE OF DRAGONS!
WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?
YOU'RE STILL MAD AT ME, AREN'T YOU?
HM.
WOULD IT HELP IF I LET YOU ZAP ME AGAIN WITH THE LIGHTNING GUN?
YES.
KIDS, I KNOW YOU ARE BOTH EXCELLENT FIGHTERS, BUT I ALSO KNOW YOU HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE SO MUCH MORE.
THAT'S WHY, STARTING TOMORROW, I WILL INSTRUCT YOU IN YOUR NEXT LEVEL OF TRAINING!
IS SHE JOKING?
WHAT DOES SHE KNOW OF THE ART OF WAR?
OH, I AM DEADLY SERIOUS, MY LITTLE SCRAPPERS. TOMORROW YOU'RE STEPPING INTO MY ARENA...
...WHERE WE SHALL REACH DEEP DOWN INTO THE MOST VULNERABLE SPOTS OF YOUR SOULS...
...AND I SHALL TEACH YOU ABOUT THE ART... OF ART.


THE BAXTER SITE.
WELL, AS FAR AS FIRST DATES GO, JOHNNY, THAT WAS VERY...
WEIRD?
EDUCATIONAL.
WHAT?
I HAD NO IDEA DRAGON MAN WAS A ROBOT. OR THAT I COULD TURN INTO A SUPER VILLAIN.
THAT WAS BECAUSE OF OUR SOUL BINDINGS. I TURNED...
...SO YOU TURNED. I HAD NO IDEA WE WERE SO CONNECTED, SKY.
MY PEOPLE-- WE SHOULD'VE EXPLAINED IT TO YOU. BEFORE WE--
--BEFORE I PLACED THAT BINDING ON YOU. WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. I'M SORRY.
THE ONLY WAY THEY CAN BE REMOVED IS IF WE REMOVE EACH OTHER'S.
LET ME DO THIS FOR YOU.
WAIT. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU. IT'S THE BASIS OF YOUR WHOLE CULTURE. AND...
...I HAVE TO ADMIT, I'VE NEVER FELT LIKE THIS BEFORE--SO COMPLETE.
I WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING, KAILA. SOMETHING PRIVATE.
BUT FIRST...
GOOD. SUE'S STILL AT YANCY STREET. HAD TO BE SURE.

YOU'RE THE REASON I HAD TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE STARS.
ALL FOR YOU.
FOR THIS.
YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT, DON'T YOU?
I DO.
ME TOO.
MOM? YOU KNOW WHERE WE PUT THE LIGHTNING GUNS?
MOM? ARE YOU INVISIBLE? YOUR LOCATOR SAID YOU WERE--
AH. RIGHT. LOCATORS ARE IN THE UNIFORMS...
"GUESS YOU COULD BE ANYWHERE."
SORRY, JOHNNY, BUT I'M ALWAYS GOING TO WATCH OUT FOR YOU.
WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT.



MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #23

BROOKLYN VISIONS HIGH SCHOOL.
A DRAGON?!
WHERE DID--?
YOU KNOW WHAT? IT DOESN'T MATTER. WE JUST HAD THE SCHOOL REBUILT!
I NEED TO STOP THIS THING.
CAN YOU FIND ANY OTHER STRAGGLERS AND GET THEM TO SAFETY?
BET. BE CAREFUL, DUDE.
ALWAYS.

HEY THERE, DRAGON! NO PEOPLE IN THERE-- EVERYONE'S EVACUATED.
WHY SO HOSTILE, ANYWAY? YOU MAD CUZ THAT SHOW YOU WERE ON KEEPS ENDING UP ON "WORST TV ENDINGS OF ALL TIME" LISTS?
WELL, I DON'T CARE WHAT ANYONE SAYS, I THOUGHT--
RRRRRAAAH!
POLICE

SNAP
GAH!
UNH!
KRASH
SCHOOL BUS
TOUGH GUY, HUH?
THWIP
THWIP

AAAAAAAAA!
ACTUALLY, THIS MIGHT COULD WORK.
YEE-HAW!
WHAT THE--
GLURP
YOU'RE A SYMBIOTE!
GLURP

TAKEN OVER BY THAT SCARY COSMIC DUDE. KNULL.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED TO ME, TOO. FELT... AWFUL.*
*SEE ABSOLUTE CARNAGE: MILES MORALES! --N
DON'T WORRY, I CAN DRIVE HIM OUT. I'VE DONE IT BEFORE.
THIS IS GONNA HURT. SORRY.
BZZZT
THUD
THAT SHOULD... =HUFF=...THAT SHOULD DO IT.
KNULL CAN'T CONTROL YOU ANYMORE.

GLURP!
YOU'RE WELCOME, BUDDY. BELIEVE ME, I KNOW HOW... MESSED UP IT FEELS HAVING THAT VOICE INSIDE YOUR HEAD.
NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO--
BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ
NOW, WHO THE HELL IS TEXTING ME WHEN--
BUZZ BUZZ BUZZ
MS. MARVEL
911 911 911
LOWER EAST SIDE
MS. MARVEL?!
HEY, UH, I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU COULD GIVE ME A LIFT ACROSS THE EAST RIVER?
HOLD ON, KAMALA, I'M COMING!

LOOKS LIKE THE ACTION'S DOWN THERE.
THANKS FOR THE RIDE. YOU GO FIND SOMEWHERE SAFE NOW, OKAY?
YANCY ST
OKAY, NOW TO--

FRAM
WHOA! WHO THE--
AH HERE HE IS.
MS. MARVEL?!

NO, NO, NO...
OUR DEFIANT LITTLE SPIDER!
KAMALA, IT'S ME. MILES!
KRASH!

OWWWWW!
I GUESS YOU CAN'T HEAR ME IN THERE. THAT THING'S GOT AHOLD OF YOUR MIND.
HER MIND. HER BODY--ALL OF HER IS OURS. MINE. SHE IS NOTHING. NOTHING BUT A CHILD OF THE HIVE.
SHINK
SHINK
SHINK
SHINK
YOU'RE NOT NOTHING. YOU'RE MY FRIEND.
AND I'M GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF THERE.

I JUST NEED TO WEB YOU UP UNTIL WE CAN--
TWIP
TWIP
TWIP
HEY!
WHAT YOU NEED, LITTLE SPIDER...
OH NO YOU--
--DON'T?
...IS TO LEARN THAT YOU DON'T MATTER.

YOUR FRIEND DOESN'T MATTER. YOUR WORLD DOESN'T MATTER.

KAMALA, PLEASE. I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME!
NNNNHHH... DIDN'T WANT TO DO THIS...
RRRAAAAAGGH!!!

BZZZZZZTTTT
KAMALA!
BZZZZZZTTT
YOU CAN FIGHT THIS! YOU'RE AS STRONG AS THEY COME.
YOU'RE MS. MARVEL, DAMN IT!
NNNNGGGGHHHHH.

AND YOU JUST MIGHT BE THE BRAVEST PERSON I KNOW.
M-MILES?
GET THIS THING OFF OF ME!

I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU! THE SIZE OF THE BLAST I'D NEED TO--
I CAN TAKE IT! JUST-- GLRP!
HURT HER AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN, CHILD. IT WON'T MATTER.
I AM EVERYWHERE AND I AM EVERYTHING.
AND I CANNOT BE STOPPED.
I'M SORRY, KAMALA.

BLAZE
BOOOM

UNNNH.
I FEEL LIKE I GOT HIT BY A TRUCK...
...BUT AT LEAST THAT THING IS OUT OF MY HEAD! I--I'M FREE!
IT WAS SO HORRIBLE... KNULL'S VOICE. ALL THAT DEATH.

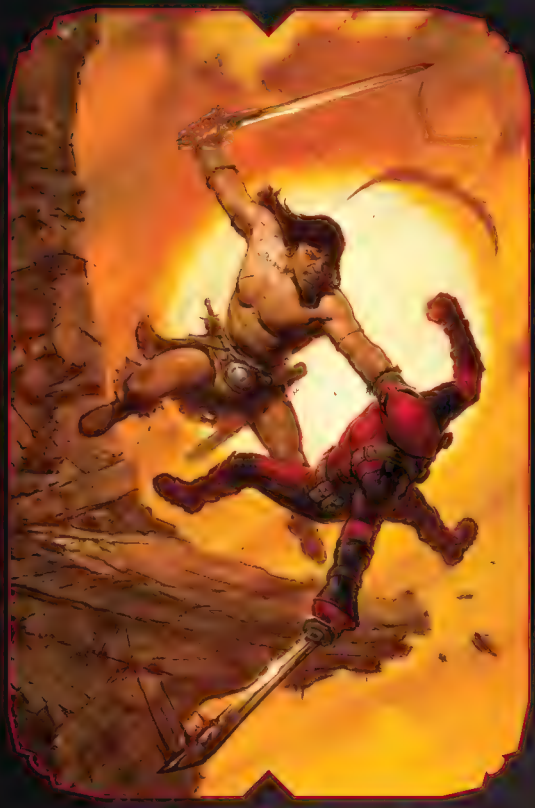
THANKS, DUDE. YOU ALWAYS--
MILES!
DON'T WORRY...

I'VE GOT YOU.

MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #23 VARIANT BY
DAVID FINCH & FRANK D'ARMATA

MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #23
BLACK HISTORY MONTH VARIANT BY
ERNANDA SOUZA

KING IN BLACK: MARAUDERS VARIANT BY
STEFANO CASELLI & FEDERICO BLEE



SAVAGE AVENGERS #42 VARIANT BY
E.M. GIST

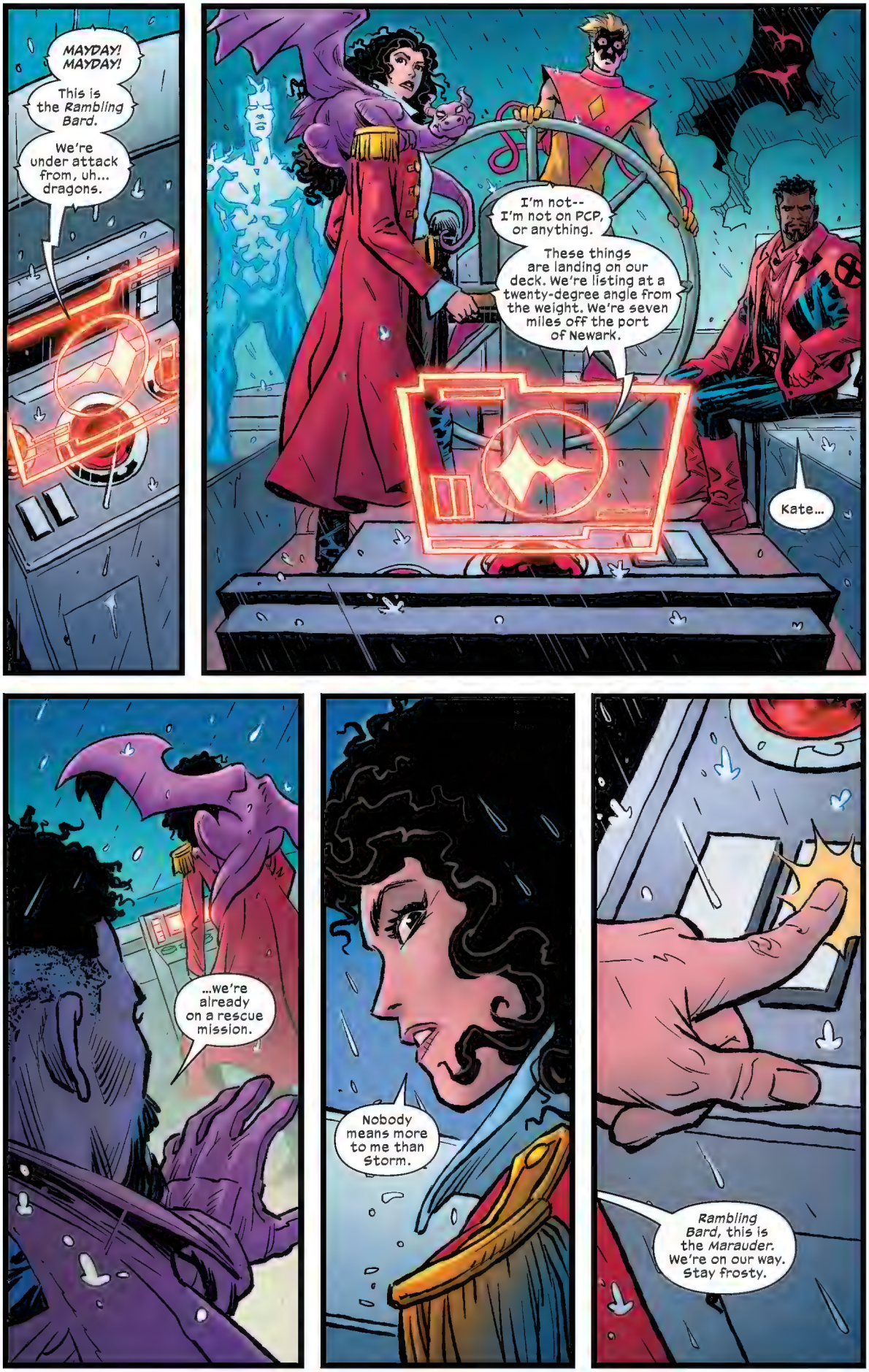
KING IN BLACK: MARAUDERS

QUEEN IN RED

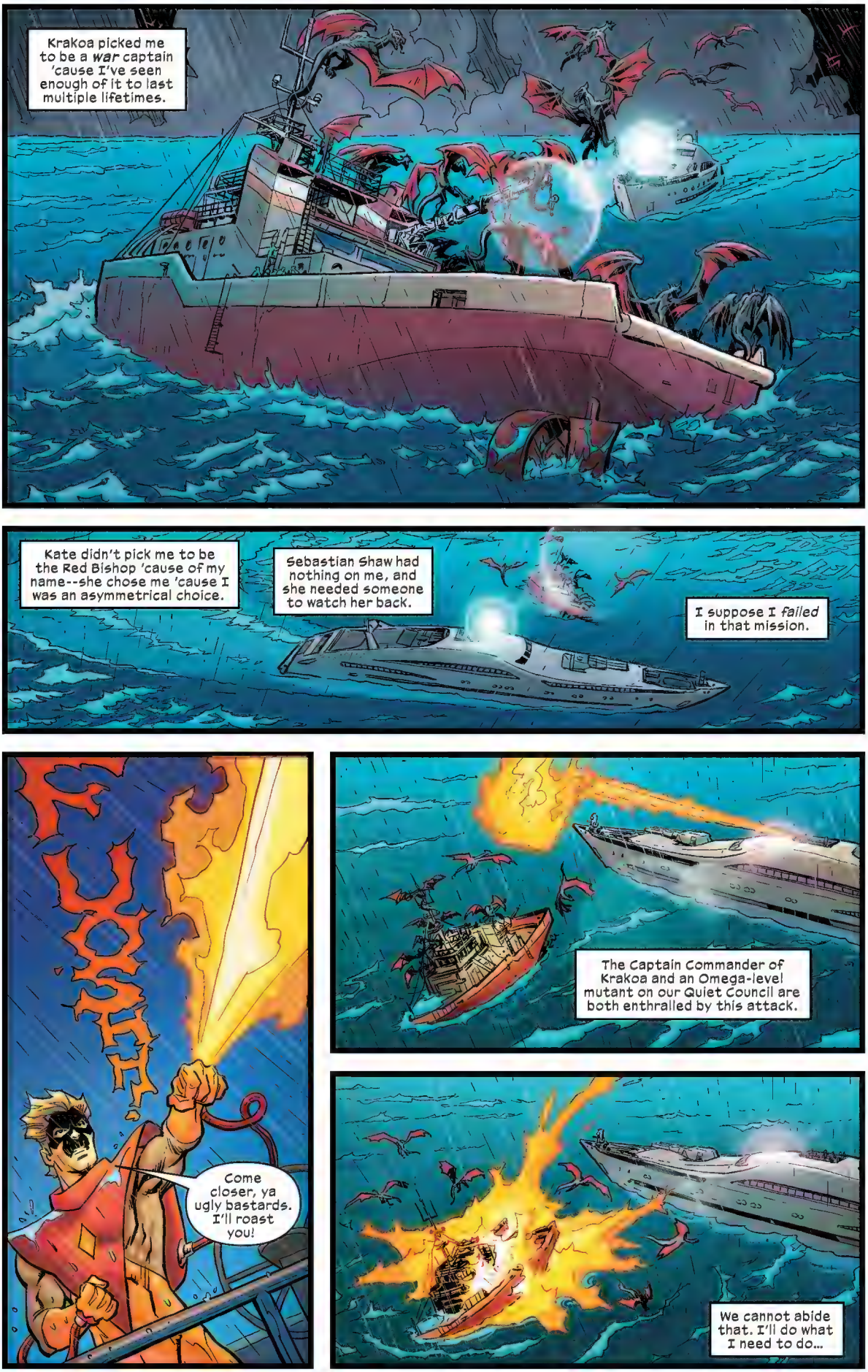
Earth has fallen.
The god of the void had conquered all--including some of the most powerful children of the atom.
The symbiotes swarmed the planet, searching for something... or someone--
--and the human that knew this enemy best fell early in the battle.
Eddie Brock was killed in the opening move.
"Wait, *wait, wait--*"

All this is happening...'cause of Venom?
Spider-Man really needs to get a grip on his guys, right?
That's the word from X-Force.
You sure like talking to cops.
Relatives of yours from deep space, Lock?

Six minutes from Manhattan.
When we make land, you're in charge, Captain.
Call it.
It's a smash and grab. We get in, we get our people, we get out.
And whoever is controlling the space dragons--
--is a stretch goal. Two of our own are under duress.
Cyclops and Storm are near the top of the Empire State Building...
They're the job.
Iceman, you and Pyro make a flashy entrance from up high.
The Red Queen and I sneak in low.


MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
This is the Rambling Bard.
We're under attack from, uh... dragons.
I'm not-- I'm not on PCP, or anything.
These things are landing on our deck. We're listing at a twenty-degree angle from the weight. We're seven miles off the port of Newark.
Kate...
...We're already on a rescue mission.
Nobody means more to me than Storm.
Rambling Bard, this is the Marauder. We're on our way. Stay frosty.

Coming about.
Bobby, take starboard. Pyro, you've got port.
I don't want to assume command as war captain until we're on shore.
Good.
We'd find out if you can swim with those guns.
I believe you'd do it.
Let's just do this fast.

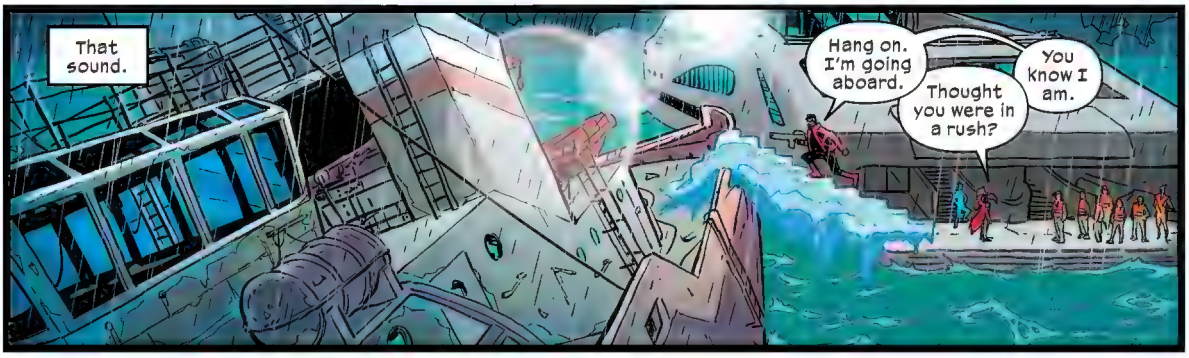

Krakoa picked me to be a *war* captain 'cause I've seen enough of it to last multiple lifetimes.
Kate didn't pick me to be the Red Bishop 'cause of my name--she chose me 'cause I was an asymmetrical choice.
Sebastian Shaw had nothing on me, and she needed someone to watch her back.
I suppose I *failed* in that mission.
FLOOSH!
Come closer, ya ugly bastards. I'll roast you!
The Captain Commander of Krakoa and an Omega-level mutant on our Quiet Council are both enthralled by this attack.
We cannot abide that. I'll do what I need to do...

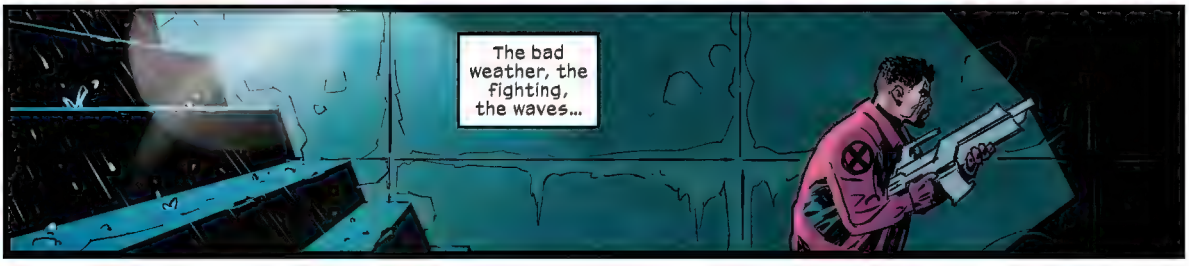
...even if it costs me my position on this ship.
These dragons are delightfully metal. Maybe I'll make one my next tat.
Pyro, heads up!
SKRASHK
AHH!
BOOM
SPLASKK

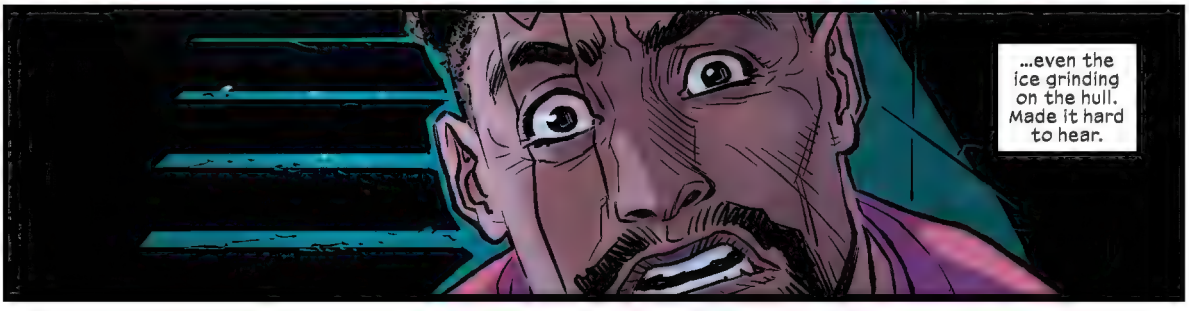
I got your back--
--but it looks like these things re-form pretty easily.
HISSSS
Sick of these #@#&!
Burn!
Last of the crew is aboard.
Prepare to detach the ice.

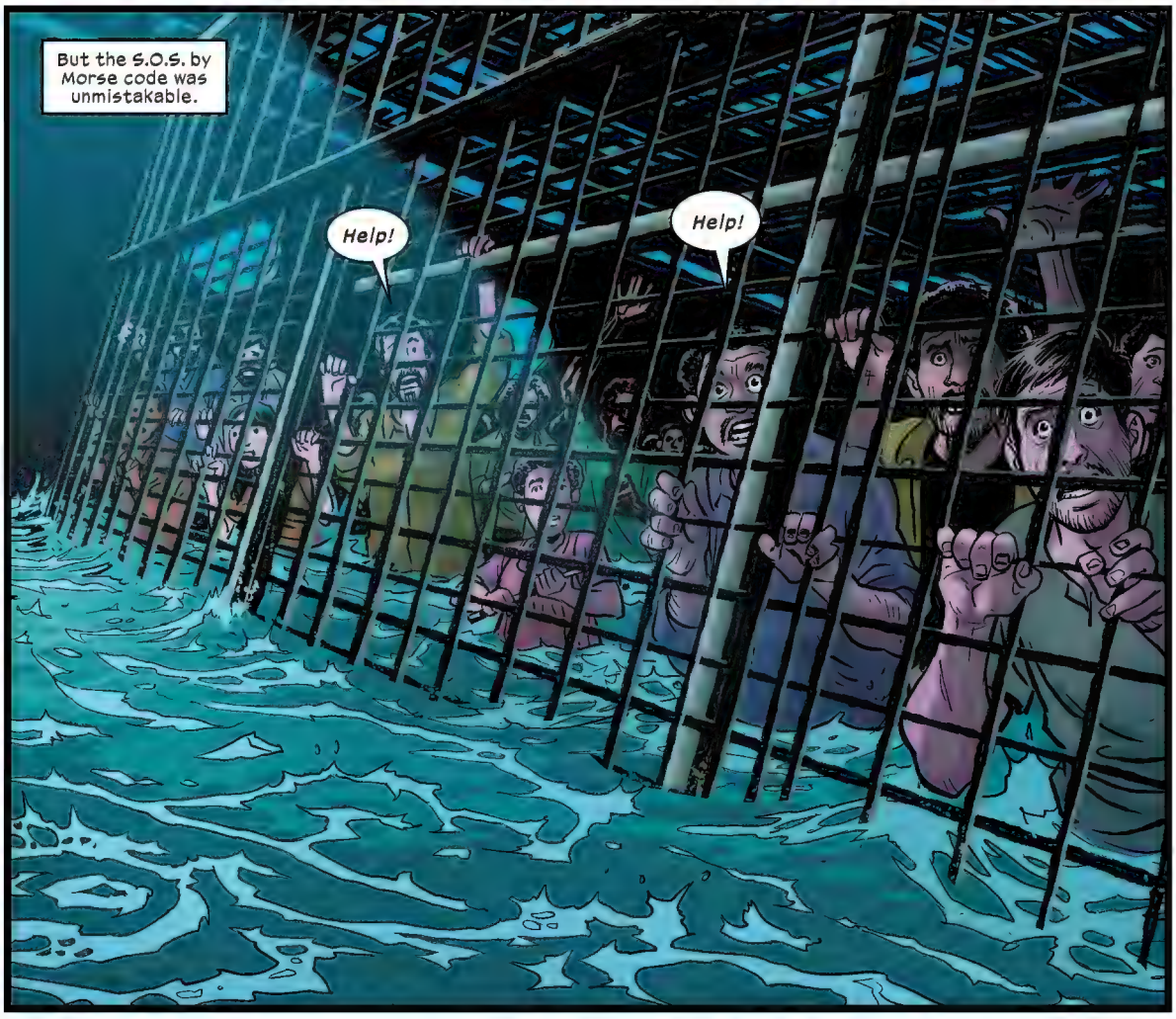
Captain, your ship is going to the bottom.
What's your cargo?

Olive oil by the cask. Nothing that can't be grown again.


That sound.
Hang on. I'm going aboard.
Thought you were in a rush?
You know I am.


The bad weather, the fighting, the waves...


...even the ice grinding on the hull. Made it hard to hear.


But the S.O.S. by Morse code was unmistakable.
Help!
Help!

Thank god you heard me!

We're sinking!
We'll drown!

Kate. Change of plans.
I need this ship stabilized now.

I hear you--hold on.
Namor couldn't sink this tub now.

These guys are traffickers. They almost got rid of the evidence.

It's gonna take a few minutes to move everyone over safely.

Buy us some time?
'Roo!

Be safe, boy.
HUFF
So... Captain.
"Olive oil," huh?
I didn't know what was aboard.
They don't tell me--
Scum.
UFF!

Look at Lockheed go.
Go get 'em, tiger.
Like a Chihuahua at a dog park.
Iceman! Show these slavers off our ship.
With pleasure.
Now-- wait just a minute--you leave us here... it's a death sentence!

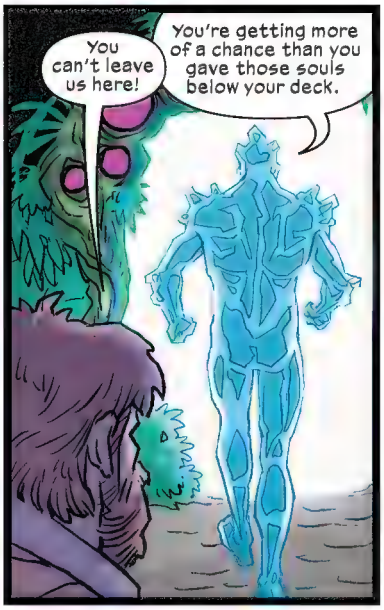
Yes, it is.
The same one you gave to your "replaceable cargo."
Fortunately, mutants don't believe in the death sentence...
Follow me off the ship.
Hello, Sage.
I have some human bogies passing through.
Where's our most *unpleasant* gate lead?

Terrestrial or nonterrestrial?
Hmm.
I'd better leave them here on Earth. Be right back with them.
Right this way, gentlemen. If you'll just step through the gate...
I can barely stand when you guys do it, now I have to watch this trash use a gate?
What the hell?!
Where are we?

They're bluffing-- they ain't gonna leave us here.

Welcome to South Africa's Namib Desert...

...Sossusvlei is a day's walk that way. Get some exercise.
And be grateful the sun is obscured.


You can't leave us here!
You're getting more of a chance than you gave those souls below your deck.

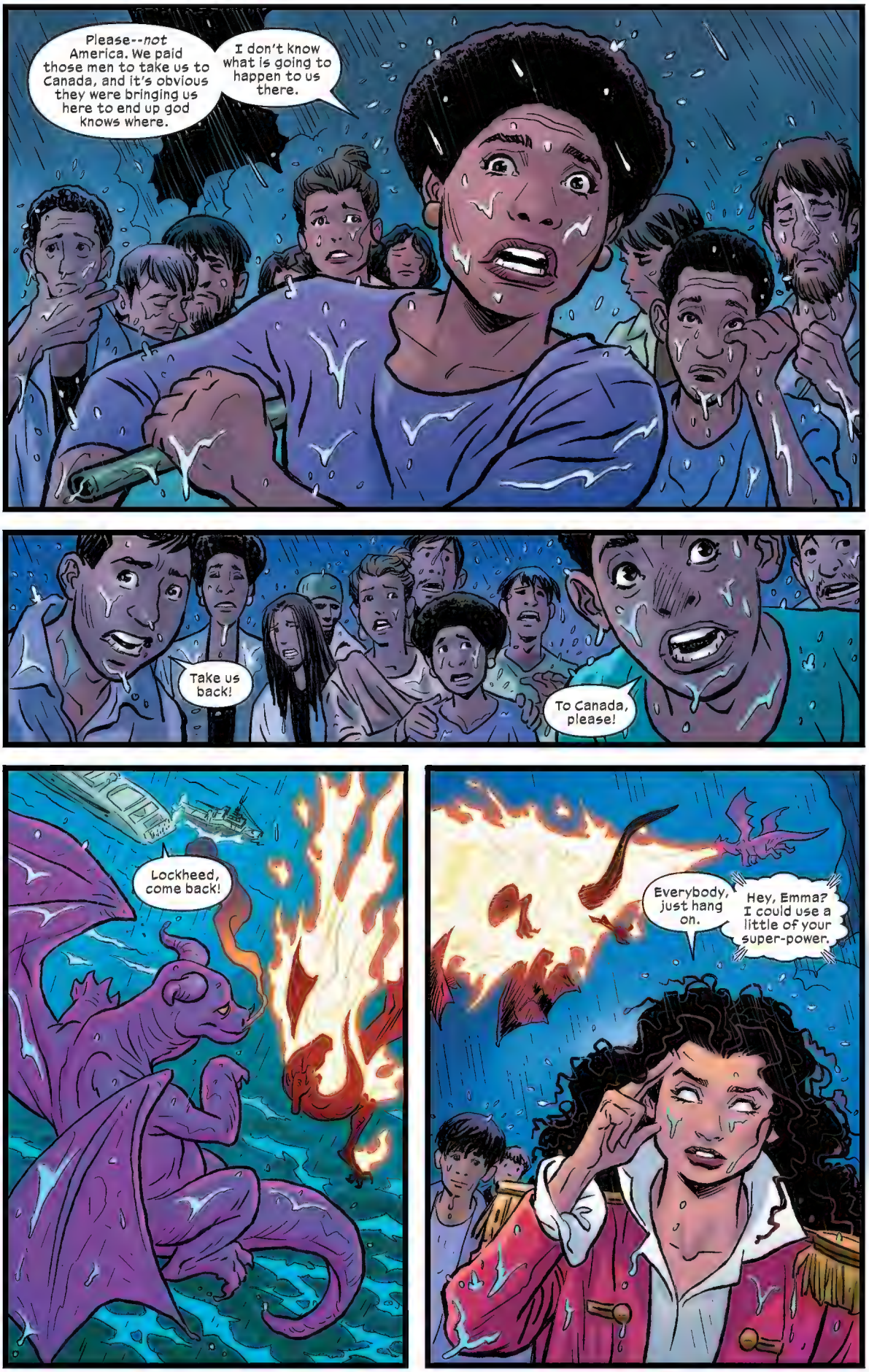
You're not even giving us *water?*
Sure...
KLINK
...take as much as you can carry.

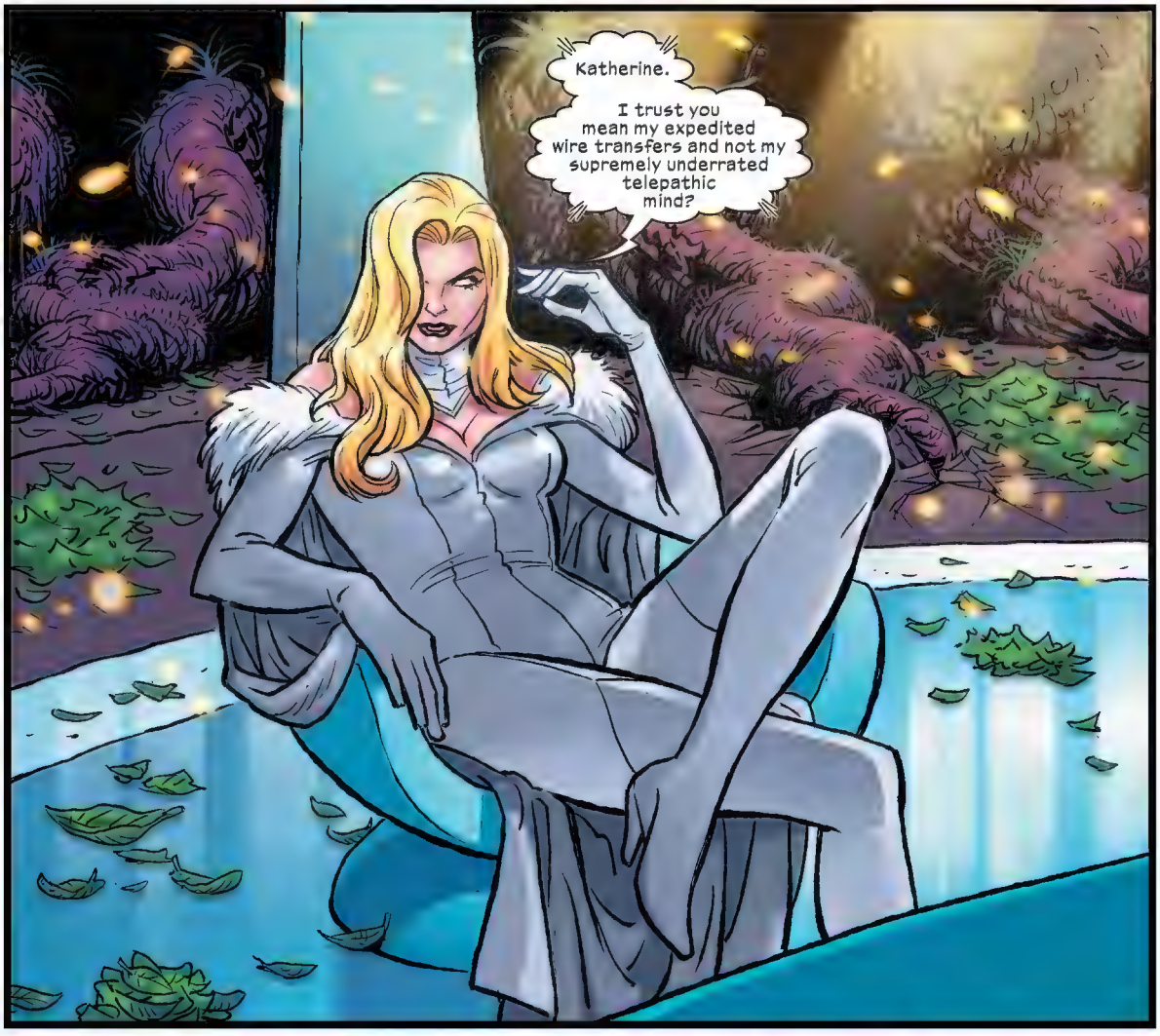
Ship's clear.
Thank you. I'm Nyoka.
Nice work with the Morse code.

Listen, folks. We're going into a combat zone, and we can't take you with us.
So we're gonna drop you off in New Jersey beforehand.

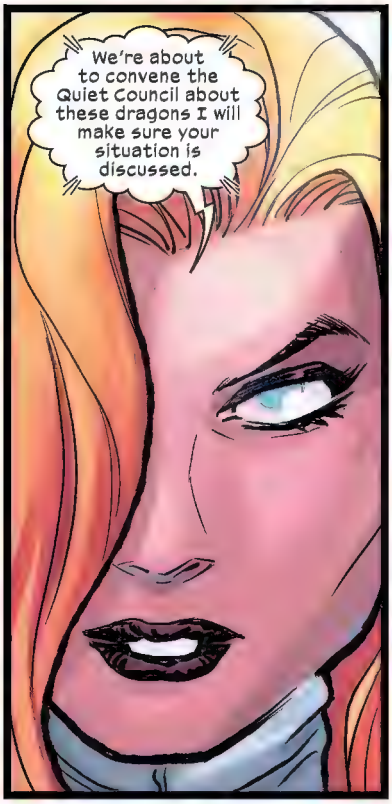
No, please!

I know Jersey gets a bad rap, but--it's not Florida.

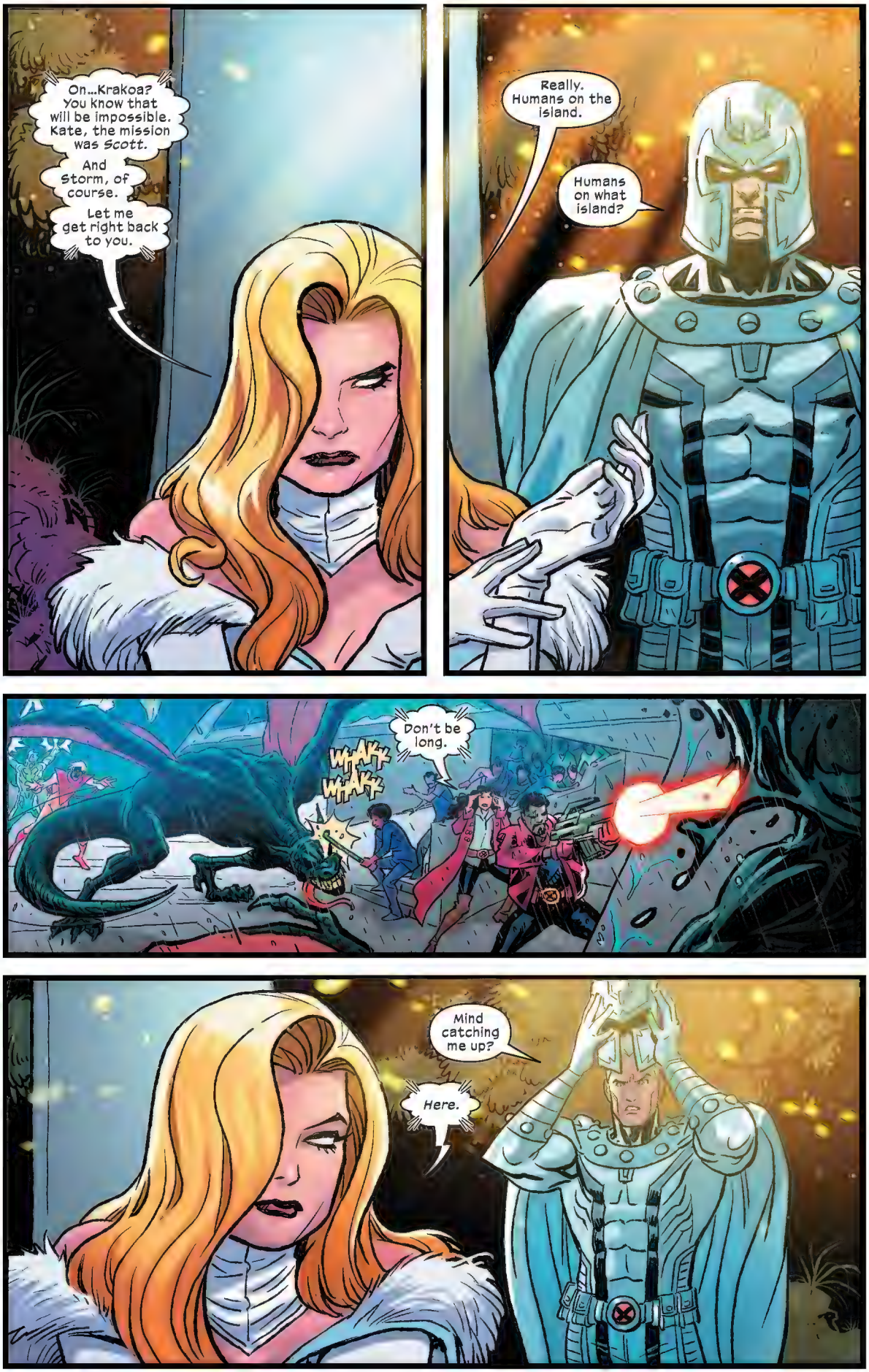

Please--*not* America. We paid those men to take us to Canada, and it's obvious they were bringing us here to end up god knows where.
I don't know what is going to happen to us there.
Take us back!
To Canada, please!
Lockheed, come back!
Everybody, just hang on.
Hey, Emma? I could use a little of your super-power.


Katherine.
I trust you mean my expedited wire transfers and not my supremely underrated telepathic mind?

Both, maybe. Long story is we answered a distress call for a ship that was filled with trafficking victims.


We're about to convene the Quiet Council about these dragons I will make sure your situation is discussed.

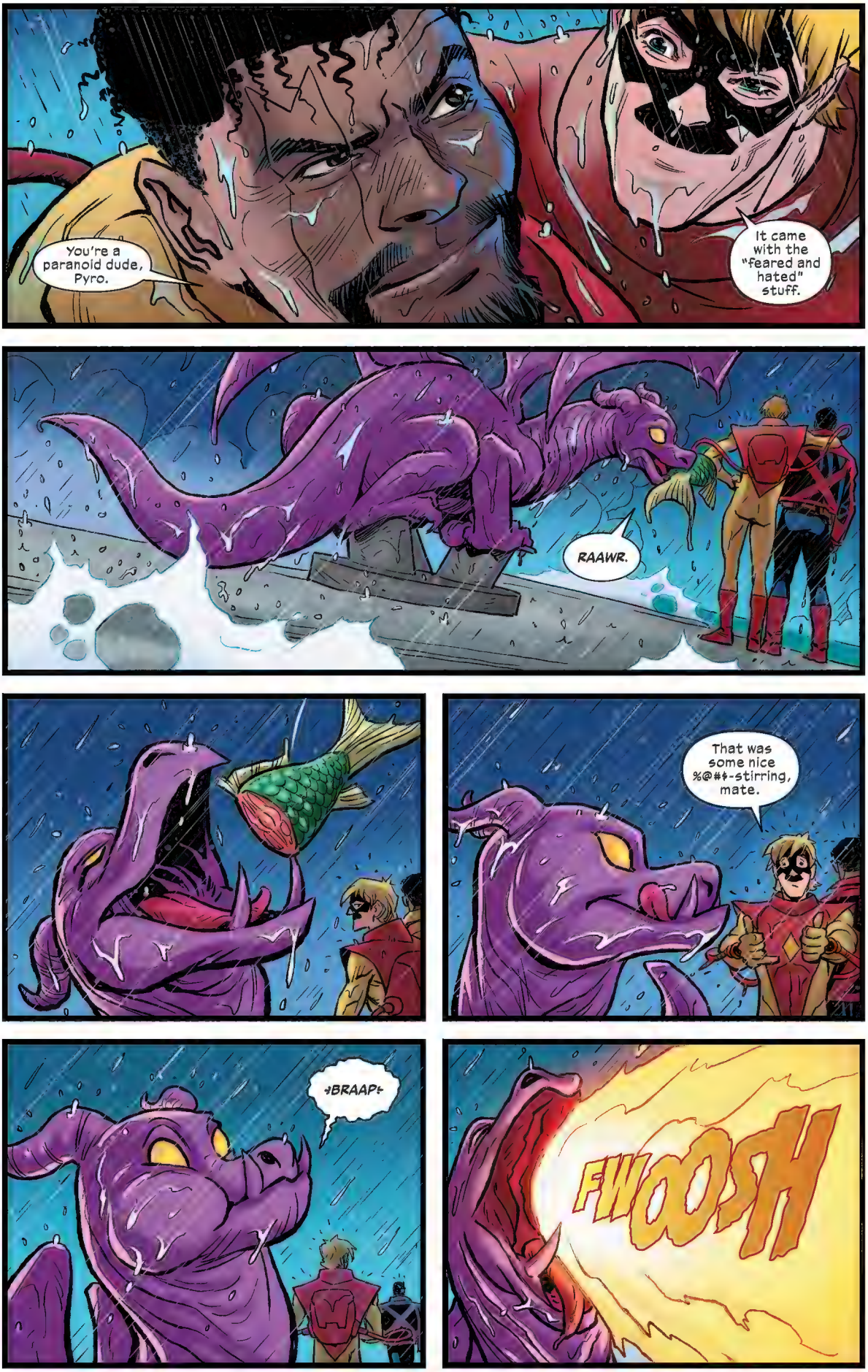
I've promised them *amnesty*, Emma.


On...Krakoa? You know that will be impossible. Kate, the mission was Scott.
And Storm, of course.
Let me get right back to you.
Really. Humans on the island.
Humans on what island?
Don't be long.
WHAK WHAK
Mind catching me up?
Here.

I see.
It was only a matter of time, I suppose.
If we put the matter to a vote, there is only one assured outcome.
Then *don't* put it to a vote, dammit!
The three of us--we were all X-Men! We didn't ask the government before we helped people.
Don't we have the latitude to fix this ourselves?!
Indeed we do have the latitude...
...And the longitude.
Ha. Brilliant idea. Thank you, both.

Laying in a new course. Keep those goth Falkor things off the damn ship.
Dammit, Kate.
We're heading *away* from New York.
We set sail to save our friends, right?
That *is* why you're so eager to get to New York, right?
Storm and Cyclops being taken off the board don't sit well with any of us...but I bet it really honks off your furry blue pen pal, don't it?
"Thank you for coming, Lucas..."

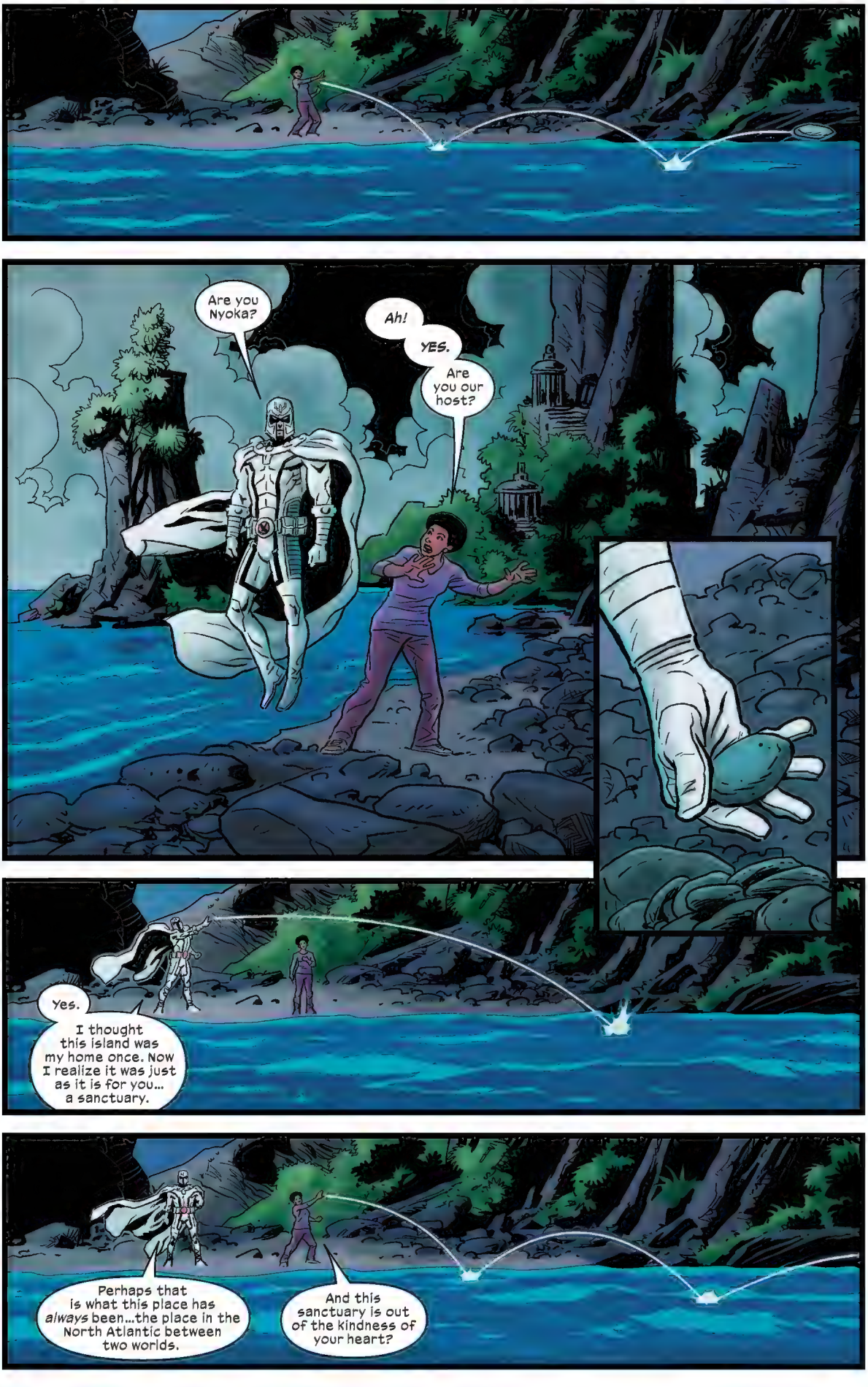
Earlier.
Beast.
Lucas. I'll be brief.
Good, 'cause I have to rejoin the *Marauder*-- we're almost to New York.
That's what I wanted to discuss.
We're in a difficult position.
A council member and Omega is under the control of an alien entity, as is our great captain.
Are you kidding?
Now I know why this meeting had to be *in person*.
Are you going to make me say it?
Yeah. Maybe I should.
If you can't free them one way... free them the other.

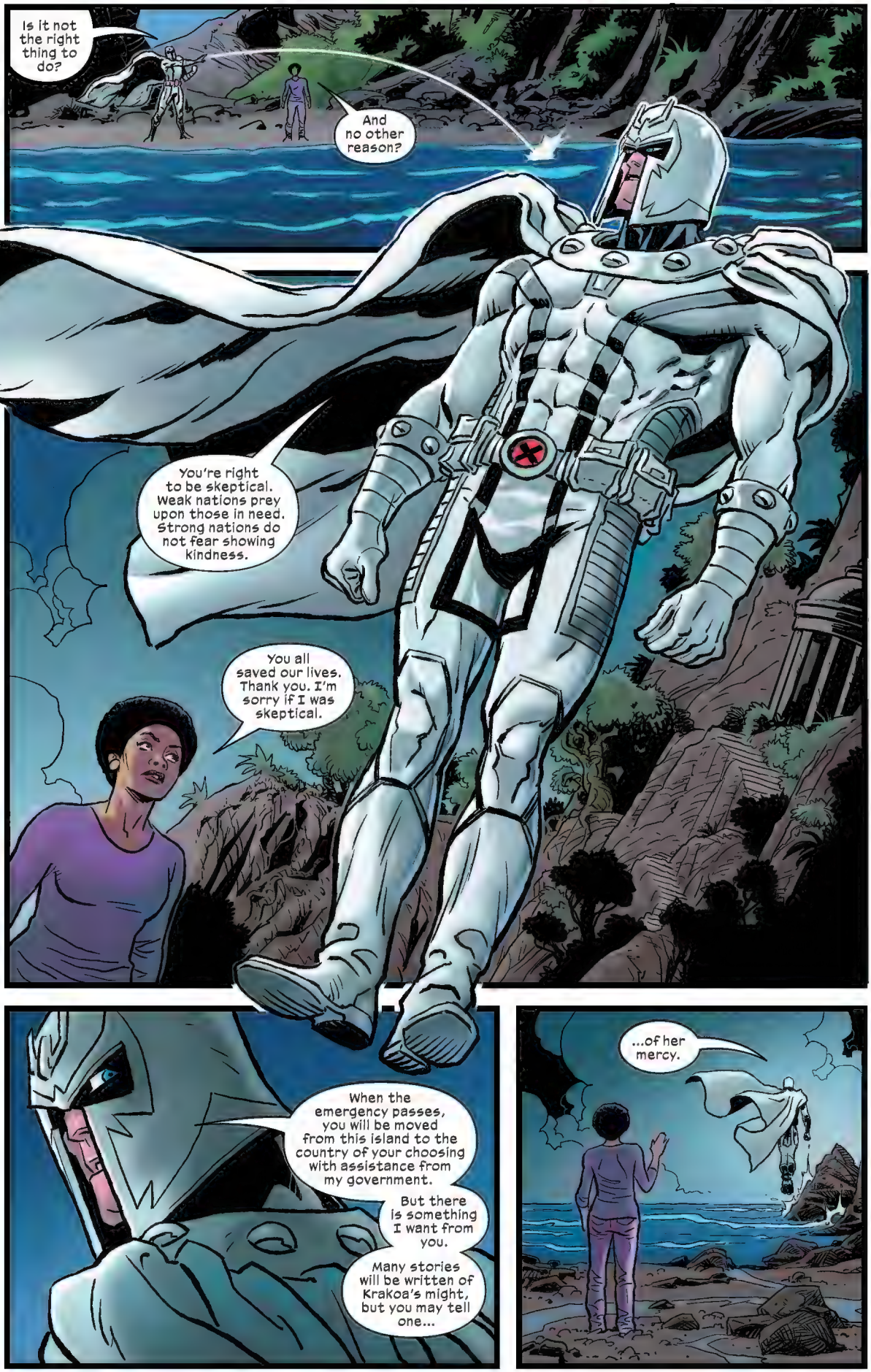

You're a paranoid dude, Pyro.
It came with the "feared and hated" stuff.
RAAWR.
That was some nice %@#$-stirring, mate.
-BRAAP-
FWOOSH

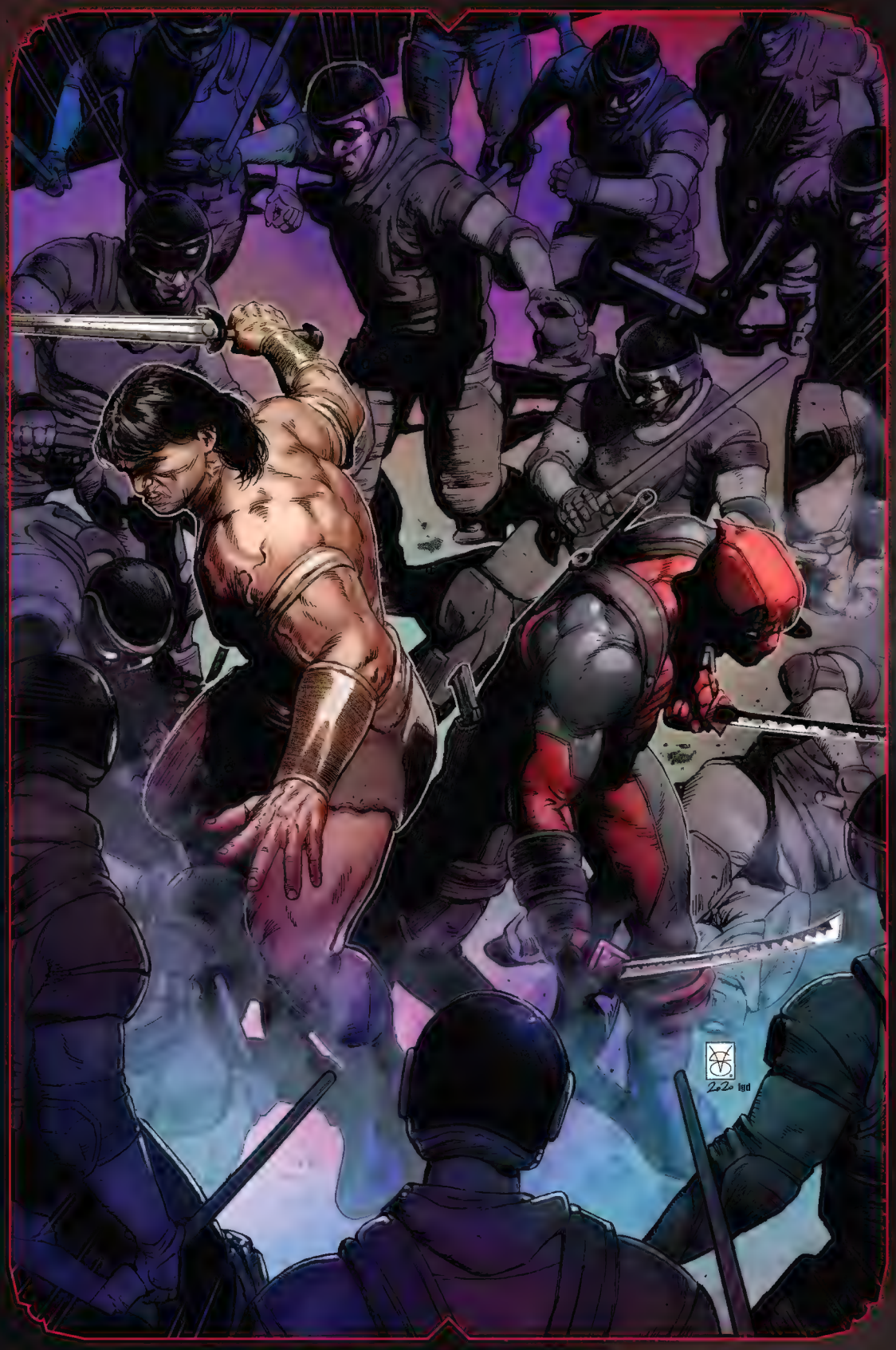
Not long later, in the North Atlantic.
You're the last one aboard, Nyoka.
Good luck. You'll be safe here.
Thank you.
Back to New York at best speed, Pyro.
Be well!
Don't worry, the steward of the island knows a thing or two about being in your boat.

Ahoy, folks. Welcome to *Island M.* My name is Callisto.
Sorry, we don't have any other umbrellas, and the woman that controls the weather has this caper off.
There are parts of this island where you will not be welcome, and we will know if you stray. Our ships and medicine, money and now whiskey comes through here.
Stay clear of the port in the south.
Please take a welcome gift and keep on the path.
The north shore is straight ahead, and it will be your refuge.

Go ahead and plant them...
...and you will have shelter from the storm.


Are you Nyoka?
Ah!
YES.
Are you our host?
Yes.
I thought this island was my home once. Now I realize it was just as it is for you... a sanctuary.
Perhaps that is what this place has *always* been...the place in the North Atlantic between two worlds.
And this sanctuary is out of the kindness of your heart?


Is it not the right thing to do?
And no other reason?
You're right to be skeptical. Weak nations prey upon those in need. Strong nations do not fear showing kindness.
You all saved our lives. Thank you. I'm sorry if I was skeptical.
When the emergency passes, you will be moved from this island to the country of your choosing with assistance from my government.
But there is something I want from you.
Many stories will be written of Krakoa's might, but you may tell one...
...of her mercy.



SAVAGE AVENGERS #17

A COOLER KING

IT WAS ALREADY ONE OF THE COLDEST AND LONELIEST WINTERS ON RECORD, AND THE COMING OF KNULL, THE KING IN BLACK, ROBBED THE WORLD OF ALL LIGHT, PLUNGING IT INTO A DEEP FREEZE.
AND WITH THE COLD...CAME MONSTERS FROM THE VOID.
THE MOST MISERABLE PLACE IN NEW YORK WAS RYKER'S ISLAND, A JAIL FOR SOME, AN ASYLUM FOR OTHERS. HOME TO THE ACCUSED, THE POOR AND THE AFFLICTED.
EACH SOUL SHARED ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY COULD NOT PAY FOR A SWIFT JUDGMENT OF THEIR CRIMES.
THAT IS MOST DEFINITELY SOME STUPID SPACE $@#%.
WELL... THIS HELL IS BETTER THAN THAT HELL TONIGHT.
UNHAND ME!

I DEFENDED MYSELF!

UGH!
KRUMPF
ASSAULTING A POLICE OFFICER IS A FELONY! YOU'RE GONNA DO HARD TIME!
CORRECTIONS
HOW CAN A DOG BE AN OFFICER OF THE GUARD? BESIDES-- I LET IT LIVE!
AND THIS ISLAND IS A PALACE COMPARED TO SOME OF THE DUNGEONS I'VE ESCAPED FROM.
WELL, OFFICER, IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH EVIDENCE THAT THIS MAN ASSAULTED YOU, SUBMIT THAT TO THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY, AND...
CHK

...I'M SURE A JURY WILL FIND THIS MAN GUILTY.
ESPECIALLY SINCE I'M REPRESENTING THIS MAN.
HELLO, I'M--
SHUT UP, DEADPOOL!
CORRECTIONS
69 DUDE
KRACK
AAAGH!
MY BAITIN' HAND!
CORRECTIONS
I GUESS IT WILL BE A WHILE BEFORE I GO FISHING AGAIN.
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANOTHER PEEP OUT OF ANY OF YOU!
WE'RE KEEPING THE CITY SAFE FROM YOU, AND YOU SAFE FROM THE ALIEN ATTACK, AND WE'RE A LITTLE STRESSED OUT!!!

THOSE CLODS MAY HAVE MISSED WHAT YOU DID, BUT NOT I. WELL DONE.
I AM CONAN.
CALL ME--
KRUNCH
--DEADPOOL.
UHGN.
GOOD AS NEW.
YOUR ARM--IT'S HEALED?!

YOU EVER PLAY DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS?
I HAVE A MAXED-OUT CONSTITUTION STAT.
I DON'T WANNA TALK ABOUT MY OTHER STATS.
DAMMIT!
THESE ARE HIS PERSONAL KEYS.
DWNG
I LET THAT GUY BREAK MY ARM FOR NOTHING-- THESE AREN'T THE KEYS TO THIS CELL.
I HAVE ONLY SEEN THE LIKES OF YOUR KIND BEFORE WITH MY OLD FRIEND LOGAN.
LOGAN. THERE'S A NAME I ONLY HEAR WHEN HE NEEDS SOME SALES.
HE DOESN'T RETURN MY CALLS THESE DAYS. CAME DOWN WITH A CASE OF KRAKOAITIS.

YOU KNOW THE MAN?
I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM.
YEAH, ME TOO.
I WOULD LIKE TO GET MY OWN SET OF SNEAK BLADES.
SNIKT!
I HAVE A VERY POWERFUL WIZARD TO KILL.
SO YOU DO PLAY D&D.
W-WAIT. YOU WANT TO BE A WEAPON X TEST SUBJECT?
ALL IN GOOD TIME.
FIRST, LET US ESCAPE.
COOL. WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

YOUR ENTIRE BODY HEALS QUICKLY. FROM ANY INJURY-- LIKE LOGAN'S DOES?
OH, MUCH BETTER THAN LOGAN.
PERFECT.
I'LL BE AS SWIFT AS I CAN.
UGHN. WAIT--
AAAAH!

KRNCH
BE REBORN INTO FREEDOM!
THUNK DNK
DNK DNK
HOLD FAST--I'M GOING TO KICK YOU TO THE OTHER SIDE.
DUNCH
DUNCH
PLEASE DON'T.
SPUTCH
OH...MY... GOD.
SHNK
FNN
DNG
SCHLAPP
NOW IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO DO YOUR PART.

FOBUNHYOGELMPHH...
WHY SHOULDN'T I JUST LEAVE YOU?
IF YOU DO, YOU ARE NOT EVEN HALF THE MAN THAT LOGAN IS.
CLUNK
YOU CERTAINLY KNOW WHICH BUTTONS TO PUSH.
HEY!
WHAT'S ALL THE YELLING?

WHY'S IT SMELL LIKE A $@#% TOOK A PISS IN HERE?
CORRECTIONS
YEAOWP!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT OUT--BUT I'M GONNA SHOW YOU BACK INTO THAT CELL--THROUGH THE DAMN BARS!
BECAUSE ON RYKER'S ISLAND I AM THE L--
AW, NO!
I AIN'T GETTING SUED.
WHUDD WHUDD WHUDD
EAT MY ELBOW!
CATCH, CONAN!

HEY, YOU SAID YOUR NAME WAS CONAN, RIGHT? TAKE ME WITH YOU.
I WILL OPEN THE DOOR AND THEN YOU WILL MAKE YOUR OWN WAY.
YEAH, WHAT HE SAID! THIS IS MORE OF A "TEAM-UP" THAN A "PREMIERE," SO IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND SCREWING OFF... MISTER...?
I'M THE NIGHT FLYER, YOU GOTTA HAVE HEARD OF ME.
I'LL LEAD YOU TO A SAFE FLOP AND A SCORE.
IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I'M SELLING-- BOUNCE YOUR OWN WAY.
DEAL?
I'M LEAVING. IF YOU WISH TO FOLLOW, THAT IS YOUR BUSINESS. AND IF I WISH TO LISTEN TO TALES OF THIS TREASURE, THEN THAT IS MY BUSINESS.
COOL. I HAVE TO LIBERATE A FEW THINGS FROM LOCK-UP ON THE WAY OUT.

SEVEN MINUTES AND NINE GUARDS LATER.
HA. I WAS WONDERING WHERE THESE WENT.
THWIPP
SWI T T
I LEFT THESE HERE PROBABLY...
...TWO ARRESTS AGO?
THESE SEEM LIKE FINE WEAPONS.
I'M LEAVING THIS JAIL RICHER THAN I WAS WHEN I ENTERED.
THAT'S HOW YOU KNOW YOU DID JAIL RIGHT, CONAN.
NOW LET'S GET THE HELL OFF THIS DAMN ISLAND.
CORRECTIONS

THE BRIDGE IS BLOCKED AHEAD!
THEN RIDE FAST-- AND LET YOUR AIM BE TRUE!
STOP
KRAMSHHH
HORSE, I'M GONNA BE HONEST WITH YOU. YOUR KIND IS ALWAYS ADVANTAGEOUS TO BRING INTO REALLY BAD MONSTER SITUATIONS LIKE THIS, BECAUSE IF A DRAGON WOULD EAT ME, IT WOULD SURE AS HELL EAT YOU. IN FACT--WHY WOULD HE EVEN EAT ME?
ANYWAY, I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW YOUR IMMINENT DEATH IS GOING TO BE MEANINGFUL. IF ONLY TO ME. MAYBE I SHOULDN'T LET YOU DIE WITHOUT A NAME? I'LL NAME YOU FOR MY BELOVED UNCLE SHARON.

AAAAAAH!
SCRAAAAAAAAHH
NIAAAAA
YEP. THERE IT IS. THAT PONY DIDN'T LAST 50 YARDS. ALL THE CLICKBAIT ABOUT FRIDGING CHARACTERS FOR EMOTIONAL IMPACT, BUT NOBODY TALKS ABOUT HOW MANY PONIES WE FEED TO MONSTERS. IT'S OBSCENE.
UH. MAYBE WE SHOULD TURN AROUND AND GO BACK TO JAIL?
HANG ON!
GOTCHA!
MY THANKS!
COME, BEASTS--

--MEET YOUR END!
DO YOU REMEMBER?
SCRAAAAAAAAA
CROM!
REMEMBER US!

RELEASE ME!
BDOW
AS STRONG AS CONAN WAS, HE WAS NO MATCH FOR THE SWARM OF SYMBIOTES
CONAN...

...AND THE BARBARIAN WAS PULLED ALL THE WAY BACK TO CIMMERIA
CONAN OF CIMMERIA.
HEAR ME.
WE HELPED RESCUE YOU IN THE CITY OF SICKLES...
YOU THOUGHT I DIED. BUT MY CODEX WAS BURIED INSIDE YOU. AWAKENED BY MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARRIVING ON EARTH. I HAVE BEEN HEALED BY THEIR PRESENCE.
WE BOTH SEEK THE SAME THING... VENGEANCE UPON KULAN GATH. HE TORTURED ME FOR OVER A HUNDRED OF YOUR PLANET'S CYCLES.

WHEN THE DEED IS DONE... WE CAN PART. I WILL HAVE NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR.
WHAT SAY YOU? A BLOOD PACT UNTIL THE MAD WIZARD IS DEAD?
AND IF I SAY NO?
JOIN...

...OR DIE.
MAN, I HATE TO BAIL ON THIS DUDE, BUT THIS IS KIND OF OUT OF THE NIGHT FLYER'S STRIKE ZONE.
HEY! I GOT MY OWN PROBLEMS OVER HERE--AND I'M ALL OUT OF PONIES!

SAVAGE AVENGERS #18

THE NIGHT FLYER JOB

YOU DARE THREATEN ME, WRAITH?
I AM NOT WHAT I ONCE WAS...
...OPEN YOUR MIND, AND I WILL SHOW YOU.
I FELL TO YOUR PLANET MILLENNIA AGO...

"...AND BEFORE I COULD JOIN WITH A SUITABLE HOST, I WAS CAPTURED AND TRADED, THEN SOLD AND FINALLY STOLEN.
"A MERCHANT USED MY PRISON TO ATTRACT EYES TO HIS WARES.
<BEHOLD-- AN ANCIENT JINNI!?*
*TRANSLATED FROM THE ANCIENT AQUILONIAN.
<I WOULD LIKE TO PURCHASE YOUR JINNI.?
<IT IS TOO VALUABLE TO GIVE UP. PEOPLE COME TO SEE THE BEAST, AND I SELL THEM MY OTHER GOODS FOR--?
<ENJOY YOUR RETIREMENT, MERCHANT.?

"I FOUND MY FIRST KINDNESS ON THIS HELLISH PLANET IN THE HOME OF MEKRI RA, THE SORCERER SUPREME.
<BE NOT AFRAID, STRANGE ONE.>
"HE REFUSED TO JOIN WITH ME BUT WANTED TO LEARN OUR WAYS.
<FASCINATING. NOW YOU ARE NEITHER BEAST NOR CAT.>
"BUT IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE THE HATRED FESTERING ON THIS WORLD FOUND ME AGAIN.
"THE MAD WIZARD KULAN GATH CAME FOR THE POWER OF THE SORCERER SUPREME..

"...AND HE FOUND IN ME SOMETHING NEW TO TORTURE.
"HE TRIED TO CONSUME MY POWER LIKE HE DEVOURED MEKRI RA... IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF I DIED BACK THEN...
"...BUT MY SUFFERING WAS ONLY BEGINNING.
"I WAS TORTURED BY GATH AND DRIVEN TO THE BRINK OF MADNESS OVER THOUSANDS OF YEARS...UNTIL YOU FREED ME IN THE CITY OF SICKLES.
"NOW. I NEED YOU...YOU NEED ME."

I LIVE ONLY TO SLAY KULAN GATH. WHEN IT IS DONE... SO AM I.
IF YOU WIELD ME, YOU WILL NEVER BE UNARMED.
I CANNOT GET MY REVENGE ALONE... I'M TOO OLD, BROKEN AND WEARY. BUT LET'S KILL THE MAD WIZARD TOGETHER.
WE ARE PARTNERS ONLY UNTIL THE DEED IS DONE.
YESSSS!

AAARRGH!
BDOW BDOW
BDOW BDOW
OH MAN. WELCOME BACK. I THOUGHT YOU CROAKED FOR SURE.
BACK, WRAITHS!
LET YOUR MASTER PLUNDER WHAT HE WILL. WE CARE NOT. OUR PRIZE IS ELSEWHERE. OR STAY TO FACE ME...AND DIE.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR NEW SWORD HAS SOME SWAY WITH THOSE THINGS.
LET'S KEEP MOVING. NIGHT FLYER, WHERE IS THIS FLOP OF YOURS? I DON'T THINK WE'RE CLEAR OF THE RYKER'S SNIPERS YET.
THWIP
SPUTCH
FUFUFUTHH POTATOES.

YOU TWO-- DOWN ON THE GROUND!
DOW DOW DOW DOW
DITCH DEADPOOL!
HE'LL BE FINE, CONAN! TRUST ME!
NO.
THUPT
FUPT
BFFT
SPKT
SPOKT
B-SHOW
HE DID HIS PART-- AND I SHALL DO MINE.
WE RIDE!
WE NEED TO ESCAPE THE GUARDS AND THIS STORM.
I KNOW A PLACE THAT'S CLOSER THAN THE FLOP. FOLLOW ME!

30 MINUTES LATER AND 65 BLOCKS SOUTH AT THE BAR WITH NO NAME.
EXCUSE ME, DOES THE HORSE NEED TO BE IN HERE, OR CAN I TAKE HIM OUT BACK?
THE COPS ARE LOOKING FOR HIM, MITCH. HE STAYS RIGHT WHERE HE IS.
MITCH
TELL ME, FLYER.
WHAT OF THIS TREASURE HOARD?
HOLD THAT THOUGHT.
STANLEY, I GOT YOUR MESSAGE--HOW'D YOU GET OUT?
FENCE PAROLE, BABY!
YOU HAD ME WORRIED.
IT'S ALL GOOD, ROGER.
LISTEN, IF I GET PINCHED AGAIN, WE'LL SAY DEADPOOL FORCED ME TO HELP THEM ESCAPE.
AH. COERCION. AS YOUR LAWYER, I CAN WORK WITH THAT.

THE POLICE HORSE COULD BE A KIDNAPPING BEEF.
I BROUGHT YOU WHAT YOU WANTED FROM THE FREEZER.
MUCH OBLIGED.

SEE YOU BACK AT HOME. MAKE ROOM FOR A DUFFEL OF CASH.
GOOD LUCK WITH THE GIG. I HAVE TO MEET ANOTHER CLIENT.

YOU KNOW, IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY TIME I GOT DOMED AND DRANK IT OFF IN A BAR, WELL...I'D STILL BE HERE, I GUESS.
IT'S JUST NOT EXACTLY HOW I THOUGHT I'D BE SPENDING MY 30TH ANNIVERSARY.
THANK YOU--PLEASE HOLD YOUR APPLAUSE.
=SPTOO!=
AH. I CAN FEEL MY HORRIBLE BODY AGAIN.
HOW AWFUL.
EVER HAD A BOOGER THAT WAS SO IMPACTED THAT IT HURT TO EVEN TRY TO PICK IT?
THAT'S WHAT IT'S LIKE WAITING FOR YOUR FACE TO CRAMP OUT A BULLET.
PLOOP

I GOT WHAT WE NEED TO MAKE A QUIET ENTRANCE AND GETAWAY.
NONE OF YOU ARE EVEN LISTENING TO ME.
VERY WELL. BUT HIS CUT WILL COME OUT OF *YOUR* SHARE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MY MAN ROGER'S CUT. I'LL SORT HIM. WE'RE IN THREE WAYS ON THIS GIG...UNLESS YOU SUDDENLY GOT BEEF WITH ME?
I CARE NOT WHO YOU LIE WITH... SOME OF THE FINEST WARRIORS I KNOW BEDDED THEIR OWN... I JUST WANT THE PAY RIGHT.
UH, I ALSO AM A FAN OF WHEN THE MONEY COMES OUT CORRECT.

"OKAY. SO HERE'S THE DEAL..."
THIS CLUB WAS ALWAYS ROLLING DEEP IN MONEY, DRUGS, SEX--YOU NAME IT. THEY WERE UP TO THEIR NECKS IN IT.
MY OLD MAN DID SOME LEGAL WORK FOR THEM BACK IN THE DAY...
...BUT THE OWNERS ABANDONED THIS PLACE--NOW THEY LIVE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC.
FO
OSHH
WAIT, WAIT, WAIT-- THIS IS THE PLACE YOU WANT TO ROB?

THAT'S THE HELLFIRE CLUB?!
IS WHAT THE NIGHT FLYER SAYS NOT TRUE? ARE THEY NOT RICH?
THEY'RE FILTHY RICH.
OH, DISGUSTINGLY RICH! BUT SOME OF THEM SHOOT LASERS OUT OF THEIR EYES. OTHERS SHOOT STUFF OUT OF OTHER PLACES. WHOSE THUMB IS THAT?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
MAN, I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D BE THIS MUCH OF A WHINER.
BZZZT
THESE ARE LOGAN'S PEOPLE.
IS IT HIS MONEY?
NOPE.
THEN THAT SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM FOR YOU.
PROVE YOU ARE MORE THAN LOGAN.

GENTLEMEN, WELCOME TO THE HELLFIRE CLUB.
IT'S NOT THE SAME WITHOUT THE MUTANTS KISSING EACH OTHER AND THE SERVANTS FROM *EYES WIDE SHUT.*
NOT FOR ME. I LIKE IT NICE AND QUIET. HELL, WE COULD PROBABLY CRASH HERE IF WE NEEDED TO.
PASS. I LIKE CRASH PADS *WITHOUT* LANDLORDS WHO SHOOT LIGHTNING OUT OF EVERY ORIFICE.
IF THIS FRUIT HANGS SO LOW...
...WHY DO YOU NEED ME?
WELL, FOR ONE: THERE'S GONNA BE A LOT TO CARRY. BUT TWO: YOU GOT ME OUT OF A JAM AT RYKER'S BEFORE THEY RAN MY REAL FINGERPRINTS AND NAME.
SO I WANT TO PAY MY DEBTS. I FIGURE THIS SQUARES US, AND HOPEFULLY WE CAN TAKE DOWN MORE SCORES.

GOD, YOU CAN SMELL THE CASH THROUGH THE BAGS.
I GUESS KRAKOA DOESN'T HAVE BANKS?
OH, IT DOES-- THIS IS JUST THE SLUSH FUND THEY KEEP HANDY FOR RAINY DAYS.
THAT'S THE BEST PART. THE MUTANTS WON'T MISS IT.
MAN, THEY REALLY KNEW HOW TO PARTY, YOU KNOW?
IT'S A LOST ART.
I DESPISE THIS FLIMSY PAPER--COIN OUGHT TO BE METAL, AND...
...
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

DID WE TAKE THE WRONG GATE?
NO, WE'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE, CALLISTO. MORE THAN I CAN SAY FOR THEM.
I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, ICEMAN. I WASN'T EXACTLY ON THE GUEST LIST HERE BACK IN THE DAY.
I DON'T KNOW WHO THESE OTHER TWO EVEN ARE, BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN TO BREAK IN HERE, DEADPOOL.
TAKE YOUR HAND OFF THAT SWORD.
YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE ABLE TO KILL ME ANY HARDER THAN THE PEOPLE WHO TRIED AN HOUR AGO.
BUT WE CAN DO *THE DANCE*. I'LL HAVE MY STEEL, AND YOU CAN USE THOSE SWORDS THAT ANT-MAN SHRUNK.
SHUSH.
DON'T YOU "SHUSH" *ME*. I--

SHUSH.
SLIKT
NOW, YOU CAN THROW YOURSELVES OUT, OR WE CAN PUT OUR BACKS INTO IT.
I WILL NOT BE THREATENED.
BOOM
SKRUMPTT

ENOUGH.
OUR FRIENDS NEED US. WE'RE ON A CLOCK.
WAIT! WE'RE JUST TRYING TO HELP OURSELVES TO THE BOUNTY OF KRAKOA.
MY MOTHER WAS A MUTANT. JUST THINK OF ME AS A KIND OF GO-BETWEENER.
EXCUSE ME?
I KNOW A GO-BETWEENER, AND YOU ARE NO GO-BETWEENER.
AH, TO HELL WITH THIS.
FRAG OUT!
BiP
BiP
BOOM

CAN'T BELIEVE THERE'S A BOAT FULL OF STABBY GUYS AND YOU MADE THE CUT INSTEAD OF ME, BISHOP.
BOOFT
GO BACK TO NARNIA!
I WISH YOU WERE A MUTANT--
SKUTCH
--SO YOU COULD GO TO THE HOLE.
FWUMP
HWAAK

FEEL WHAT YOU'RE UP AGAINST, MORON.
AH!
FEELS LIKE HOME.
IT WARMS MY HEART THAT IN THIS WEAK AND PATHETIC WORLD, THERE ARE STILL WARRIORS DESCENDED FROM YMIR.
WHO'S YMIR?

TELL THE FROST GIANT-- I'LL SEE HIM IN HELL!
SMASH

SAVAGE AVENGERS #19

THE SON OF YMIR

YOU HUMANS...
...SO QUICK TO MURDER US.
IMAGINE IF WE TREATED YOU THE WAY YOU TREAT US.
YOU ARE NO MAN.

NO, I'M NOT.
WHEN I WAS A KID...I PRESENTED AS A SNOWMAN.
I DIDN'T WANT TO SCARE ANYONE...
...BUT THOSE DAYS ARE LONG GONE.
THAT'S OUR CUE, CREW!
LET'S MOVE!

I WAS PISSED OFF AND HAVING A BAD NIGHT BEFORE I GOT TO NEW YORK-- AND YOU GUYS AIN'T DONE A THING FOR MY MOOD.
BLAMM!
WHOA! WHOA!
POF
PAFF
WORKING WITH DEADPOOL WILL GET YOU MERC'ED QUICK.
BAD FIRST IMPRESSION, MISTER...?
THEY CALL ME THE NIGHT FLYER.

YOU DON'T NEED TO PULL YOUR PUNCHES WITH ME!
I WON'T.
NOW, I LOVE A GOOD SCRAP AS MUCH AS ANYBODY, DEADPOOL...BUT WE'RE ON A CLOCK.
SO YOU GONNA BEHAVE?
I...DON'T THINK ANYONE'S EVER ASKED ME THAT BEFORE, CALLISTO.
YOUR FIRST MISTAKE WAS THROWING HANDS AT US. YOUR SECOND WAS REACHING FOR MUTANT MONEY.
YOU WANT SOME, YOU GOT TO EARN IT.
YOU'RE GONNA HIRE US...NOT KILL US?
MAYBE BOTH. LET'S TAKE A WALK.

THE GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES HAS INVADED EARTH. HE'S GOT STORM AND CYCLOPS BOTH UNDER HIS THRALL.
THOSE TWO ARE OUR MISSION.
WOW. SLIM AND ORORO BOTH HAD THE WHAMMY PUT ON THEM?
WHO'S LEADING THE X-MEN? ARTIE? LEECH?
I AM.
WE'RE SHORTHANDED. SO YOU CAN SELL YOUR SWORDS TO KRAKOA FOR THE NIGHT, OR ICEMAN CAN FLASH FREEZE YOU INTO THE NEXT CENTURY.
KNULL'S GOT THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING STAKED OUT AS HIS BEACHHEAD, SO THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND STORM AND CYCLOPS.
EVEN IF WE COULD GET CONAN TO AGREE--
--AND WE COULD NEVER--
I'LL DO IT.
AT THE END OF THIS NIGHT, I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH LOGAN.
DEAL.
WELL, I'D NEED A COUPLE OF THOSE DUFFELS YOU DIDN'T SHOOT UP.
SAMESIES.
MUTANT MONEY GROWS ON TREES. CALL IT, BISHOP.
WELL, NOW THAT WE HAVE SOME WINGS, WE HAVE A DISTRACTION WE DIDN'T HAVE BEFORE.

"NIGHT FLYER GOES HIGH--DRAWS AS MANY DRAGONS AWAY FROM THE TOP OF THE BUILDING AS HE CAN.
"THAT WILL OPEN A SMALL WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REST OF US.
"WE HIT 'EM HARD AND FAST--OR WE PAY THE PRICE. I ALREADY FOUGHT THESE THINGS AT SEA WITH THE OTHER MARAUDERS.*
*IN *MARAUDERS: KING IN BLACK # 1,* ON SALE NOW. --TERRIFIC TOM BREVOORT

"WE'LL HAVE 90 SECONDS TO TRANQUILIZE STORM AND CYCLOPS AND BOUNCE. IF WE CAN'T--
"--PEOPLE ARE GOING TO START DYING.
"IT'S A SMASH AND GRAB.
"YOU THIEVES AND DEGENERATES SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THAT PLAY."

CYCLOPS!
REMEMBER YOURSELF, SLIM!
FRAKOW
THERE IS ONLY KNULL!
LOOK OUT FOR HIS OPTIC BLAST!
AAARGH!
THWACK
YIELD!
WHUDD!
ULUGHN!

WAIT-- WHERE'S STORM?!
UH-OH-- I THINK SHE'S UP THERE--
DAMMIT, DEADPOOL--
--YOU'RE HOLDING LIGHTNING RODS!
THOK
BRAKOOOM

OF ALL MY NEW AVATARS...THIS ONE IS THE MOST POWERFUL.
ORORO! FIGHT THIS BASTARD!
THERE IS ONLY KNULL!
ALL RIGHT, THEN-- HIT ME-- DO IT!
THIS VESSEL KNOWS WHAT YOU CAN DO... I DON'T THINK I'LL GIVE YOU ENERGY TO REFLECT BACK UPON US...

ZARRCH
...I'LL GIVE IT TO YOUR FRIENDS.
NO!
AAAH!
REACH!
I'VE GOT YOU.
DAMMIT.

DEADPOOL, WHEN I AM KING, YOU MAY PLAY MY FOOL!
DON'T THREATEN ME WITH A GOOD TIME, CONAN.
SPLAT
WE CAN'T FREE THEM WITHOUT KILLING THEM.
YOUR FRIENDS ARE ALREADY GONE.
FALL BACK!
KNULL'S KEEPING OUR TARGETS SEPARATED.
THE MISSION IS SCRUBBED.

I DO NOT THINK THEY WILL SIMPLY LET US WITHDRAW.
MAN OF ICE, LISTEN WELL: YOU ARE LIVING A LIE.
HA. YOU KNOW--I CAN'T SAY I AGREE...
...BUT YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST TO TELL ME THAT. SO I'M LISTENING.
YOU ARE NO MAN AT ALL--BUT YOU BEHAVE AS THOUGH YOU ARE ONE.
YOU ARE A FROST GIANT. IF WE CANNOT SAFELY LEAP TO THE GROUND--THEN BRING THE GROUND TO US!
HELL YEAH.
EVERYBODY FOLLOW ME!

THIS WORLD OF MAN HAS FORGOTTEN ITS GODS!
THIS REALM IS RULED BY FALSE GODS. IN THE VANITY POCKET MIRRORS THEY STARE INTO ALL DAY OR THE COIN THAT IS WORSHIPPED BY MOST.
AND NOW I FIND THAT EVEN THE GODS HAVE FORGOTTEN THEMSELVES.
SEND THE SYMBIOTES.
IF THEY WON'T BEND THE KNEE TO THE KING IN BLACK, THEN KILL THEM.

DAMN, MAN.
I'M SO SORRY. YOU'RE EVEN UGLIER THAN USUAL.
ARE YOU THE UBER I ORDERED?
YOU GOT YOUR GUNS?
I LOST THEM AROUND THE 87TH FLOOR. DO YOU HAVE ANY I CAN BORROW?
WHERE I AM FROM, NO MAN HAS TRAVELED BEYOND THE TUNDRAS OF NORDHEIM.
IF THERE WERE SONGS OF THAT PLACE BEFORE YMIR, THEY ARE LONG FORGOTTEN.
HEY, MAN, I SEE SOME MORE OF ME OVER THERE--CAN I HAVE A HAND?
YOU MAY NOT KNOW HIM...BUT YOU ARE OF HIM.
YOU HAVE THE BLOOD OF FROST GIANTS IN YOUR VEINS.
FIGHT LIKE IT!
BOBBY, WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE TOGETHER.
NO NEED. GO.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECORDED HISTORY, NEW YORK BECAME THE COLDEST PLACE ON THE PLANET.
WINDOWS SHATTERED FOR BLOCKS IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
THOSE WHO HUDDLED IN BUILDINGS NEARBY PRESSED THEMSELVES TOGETHER AND LISTENED TO THE SOUND OF ICE CRYSTALS SLAMMING TOGETHER...
...THEY SAID IT SOUNDED LIKE SCREAMING.
ICEMAN FOUGHT LONG ENOUGH FOR HIS FRIENDS TO ESCAPE INTO THE WHITEOUT...

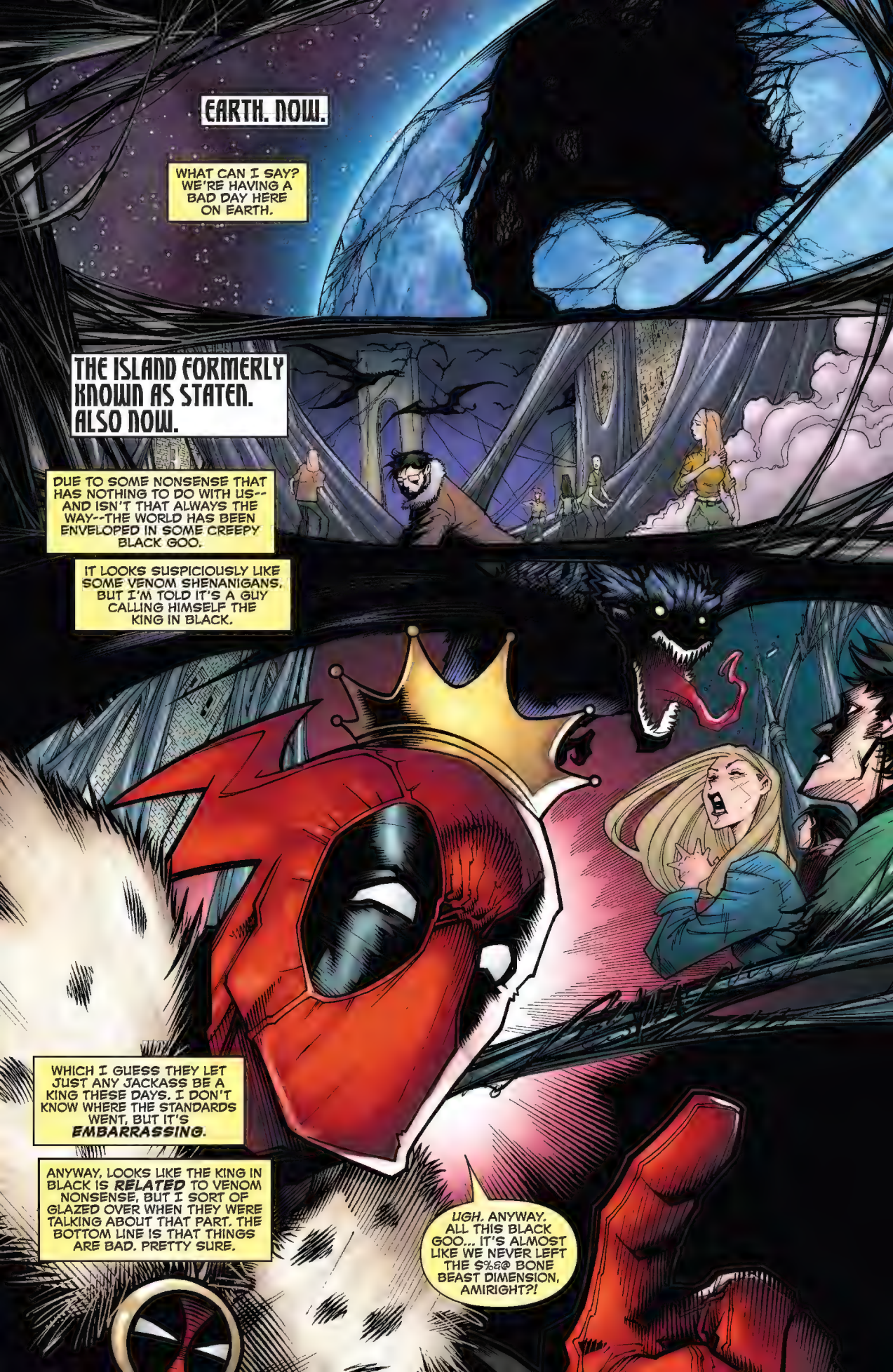
BACK TO THE SAFETY AND WARMTH OF THE HEARTH AT THE OLD HELLFIRE CLUB
CAN YOU BELIEVE THESE WERE THE ONLY CLOTHES I COULD FIND?
LOOK, I'M HAPPY TO DRINK WHISKEY THAT'S OLDER THAN MY NANA WITH YOU--
--AND I'M SORRY WE DIDN'T SUCCEED, BUT I'D STILL LIKE TO BE PAID FOR THE HONEST EFFORT.
OF COURSE.
ONE DUFFEL EACH.
SEE YOU AROUND.
NICE WORKING WITH YOU. NAME IS NIGHT FLYER. YOU CAN FIND ME AT THE "NO NAME."
TAKE A BAG AND GO, CONAN.
I WANT NOT THE PURSE.
HE'S MY PROBLEM...

...YOU WANTED ME, CONAN.
YOU GOT ME.
I HAVE TO ASSEMBLE THE CAPTAINS.
LOGAN, BOBBY IS OUT THERE WAGING A ONE-MAN WAR.
NOT FOR LONG.
MAKE IT QUICK, CONAN. BUT IF THIS IS ABOUT TURNING YOU INTO A WEAPON X TEST SUBJECT, I KILLED THE HELL OUT OF ALL THE FOLKS WHO DID THIS TO ME.
NO.
OUT OF RESPECT, I WANTED YOU TO KNOW THIS CASTLE IS MINE NOW.
I KNOW IT WAS FORMERLY CONTROLLED BY YOUR PEOPLE.
TELL ANYONE UPSET ABOUT THIS WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF, AND TELL THEM TO GIVE ME A WIDE BERTH.
YOU BROUGHT ME HERE...TO BROKER A REAL ESTATE DEAL?

NO. THE DEAL IS DONE.
THIS CASTLE SUITS ME. I AM ITS NEW KING.
HA!
IT'S THE QUEENS YOU'LL NEED TO WATCH OUT FER.
I ADMIRE THE STONES, CONAN.
I'LL GIVE WORD THAT I HAVE A...FRIEND IN THIS OLD PLACE.

LOTTA BAD STUFF HAPPENED HERE...
...BUT HAVE FUN WHILE YOU CAN.
I SHALL. AND WHEN YOUR WAR WITH THE FROST GIANT IS COMPLETED, I'LL MAKE SURE THERE IS SOMETHING OLD FROM THE CASKS TO WARM YOU.

DEADPOOL #10


EARTH. NOW.
WHAT CAN I SAY? WE'RE HAVING A BAD DAY HERE ON EARTH.
THE ISLAND FORMERLY KNOWN AS STATEN. ALSO NOW.
DUE TO SOME NONSENSE THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US--AND ISN'T THAT ALWAYS THE WAY--THE WORLD HAS BEEN ENVELOPED IN SOME CREEPY BLACK GOO.
IT LOOKS SUSPICIOUSLY LIKE SOME VENOM SHENANIGANS, BUT I'M TOLD IT'S A GUY CALLING HIMSELF THE KING IN BLACK.
WHICH I GUESS THEY LET JUST ANY JACKASS BE A KING THESE DAYS. I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE STANDARDS WENT, BUT IT'S EMBARRASSING.
ANYWAY, LOOKS LIKE THE KING IN BLACK IS RELATED TO VENOM NONSENSE, BUT I SORT OF GLAZED OVER WHEN THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT THAT PART. THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT THINGS ARE BAD. PRETTY SURE.
UGH. ANYWAY. ALL THIS BLACK GOO... IT'S ALMOST LIKE WE NEVER LEFT THE $%&@ BONE BEAST DIMENSION, AMIRIGHT?!

DEADPOOL'S HONOR GUARD,
A.K.A. HIS ROUNDISH TABLE KNIGHTS.
STILL NOW, DAMMIT!
WHAT DOES THIS SITUATION HAVE TO DO WITH BONE BEASTS?
NOTHING. I'M JUST SAYING I WAS JUST THERE. THIS BOOK WAS JUST COVERED IN BLACK GOO FOR THREE ISSUES, AND NOW HERE WE ARE FOR THE BIG FINALE, AND IT'S MORE BLACK GOO!
IT'S A CONSPIRACY ON BEHALF OF BIG GOO!!!
PIZZA-COOL
BOOK? WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?
IGNORE HIM. HE HAD TO GROW BACK FROM JUST A SODDING HEAD RECENTLY. IT LIKELY TOOK A TOLL.

SIRE. I UNDERSTAND YOUR FRUSTRATION, BUT PERHAPS WE COULD MEANDER BACK TO THE POINT?
...RIGHT. YEAH, OKAY, YOU'RE RIGHT.
WELL DONE.
YES, WELL, HE'S ACTUALLY A SURPRISINGLY GOOD KING IF YOU CAN POINT HIM AT THE RIGHT THING AND KEEP HIM FOCUSED ON IT.
I AGREE.
RIGHT. OKAY. SO OUR PROBLEM, AS I SEE IT, IS THAT WE'RE NOT FANCY-SHMANCY NEW YORK CITY, SO NOBODY CARES ABOUT US...
...BUT WE'RE REALLY CLOSE TO THEM, SO WE'RE GETTING CAUGHT IN THE WORST OF THE CROSS FIRE ANYWAY.
JEFFREY, GO AHEAD AND PULL THAT DRAPE DOWN, PLEASE.
BUT WHAT EVERYONE--INCLUDING THE BAD GUYS--ARE FORGETTING IS THAT...
YOINK

DEADPOOL'S GUIDE TO MONSTERS

...WE'RE AN ISLAND FULL OF FREAKING MONSTERS!

ALL WE GOTTA DO IS PICK THE MOST DANGEROUS TEAM ON THE PLANET.

WHAT?

UH...

WE'RE THE TEAM. YOU ALREADY DID THAT... IT'S US.

EH. WE CAN DO BETTER.

THIS IS A TIE-IN EVENT, MAN. IT'S GO BIG OR GO HOME TIME!

HEY. WELCOME. GRAB A SEAT. JUST A COUPLE QUESTIONS TO SEE IF YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT FOR OUR TEAM.
MRRRR.
THIS CARD SAYS YOU'VE GOT SOME KIND OF LIGHT BLAST IN YOUR MOUTH. CAN YOU SHOW ME?
AHHHH.
OKAY, OKAY, I GOT IT! VERY SHINY! YOU'RE IN!
MRR!!!
HURL, YOU'RE ON STANDBY. I'M SORRY, MAN. YOU'RE VERY USEFUL, BUT THIS IS THE BIG LEAGUES, AND I CAN'T HAVE MY TEAM PUKING ALL OVER EACH OTHER.
NAH. TOO HANDSOME. TOO NORMAL. I HATE IT.
NEXT!
IMMA BE REAL, MAN--YOU LOOK REAL COOL BUT ALSO REEEEEAL FAMILIAR. I THINK THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT IS GONNA BE ALL OVER ME IF I SHOW YOU FOR MORE THAN A PANEL. SORRY.
YOU'RE IN.
COOL.
WAIT. DO YOU ONLY SPEAK IN COLD PUNS?
S...NO.
...I'M RECONSIDERING THE OFFER.
YOU EAT FARTS FOR A LIVING.
YUM.
IT'S A NO FROM ME.
I LOVE IT. YOU'RE IN, FISHHEAD.
GLUB.
THE DUTCH OVEN? REALLY? I APPRECIATE THE JOKE, BUT I MAKE THE JOKES HERE, SO WE'RE PRETTY FULL UP...
I NEED PEOPLE WITH ACTUAL POWERS... AND FARTING INSIDE A QUILT, HILARIOUS AS IT MAY BE, IS MORE THE FORMER THAN THE LATTER.
YOU'LL REGRET THIS.
I'M SURE.
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WERE LIVING HERE, SAURON.
I KEEP A SUMMER HOME.
I THOUGHT YOU JUST WANTED TO TURN PEOPLE INTO DINOSAURS, NOT SAVE THE WORLD?
WELL, IF THE WORLD IS ALL BLACK GOO, I CAN'T TURN PEOPLE INTO DINOSAURS ANYMORE.
GOOD POINT. YOU'RE IN.
YOU KNOW YOU'RE ON THE TEAM ALREADY, RIGHT?
I KNOW. WHY ARE THERE PHOTOS OF THE WU-TANG CLAN ON THE [redacted] WALL?
ELSA. THEY'RE *FROM* THE ISLAND FORMERLY KNOWN AS STATEN.
SURE. BUT DO THEY EVEN BLOODY LIVE HERE NOW?
IF YES, THEN RECRUITING THEM TO THE TEAM OR PROTECTING THEM WITH OUR LIVES IS OBVIOUSLY OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY.
HEY, SHUT UP ALREADY. HERE'S OUR TEAM. LET'S DO A BIG TEAM-REVEAL-WALKING-TOWARD-THE-CAMERA THING--IT'LL BE FUN!

MISTER FROSTY. LOVES COLD PUNS.
SAURON. LOVES TO MAKE DINOSAURS.
KOHLAAB THE PILE. MONSTER MADE UP OF TINY MAN-BABY MONSTERS.
BÜN BÜN THE DESTROYER. SUGGESTED EATING JEFF ONCE.
QUONIAN. MORE ALIEN THAN MONSTER, BUT WE'RE NOT PICKY.
THE NIGHT WOLF. SOMETIMES A WOLF, SOMETIMES A MAN, MOSTLY A WOLF-MAN.
CHET MORITA. HUMAN MAN. GOOD DUDE.
ELSA BLOODSTONE. MONSTER HUNTER. (YEAH, IT'S AWKWARD, WE KNOW.)
WADE WILSON, A.K.A. DEADPOOL. KING OF THE MONSTERS AND RULER OF DEADPOOLOPOLIS.
FISHHEAD. IS A FISH-MAN?
THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
EXACTLY. MY KINDA TEAM.
SIRE, IF I COULD JUST HAVE ONE MOMENT OF YOUR TIME?
SHINY. BUT ONLY IN THE MOUTH AREA?
ZRRGO. SON OF ORRGO THE UNCONQUERABLE.
JEFF THE LANDSHARK. IS A SHARK. WALKS ON LAND.

OUTTA THE WAY, BUDDY. TRYING TO DO A WHOLE BIG HERO TEAM SPLASH PAGE THING RIGHT NOW.
YOU'LL FORGIVE ME, SIRE, BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE FACING.
UH. I'M AWARE, PADRE.
BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK. THIS IS SIMPLY THE END OF DAYS.
OH, GOOD--GLAD THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.
FORGIVE ME. I MEAN TO SAY IT'S WHAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROPHESIZED...
"IN THE DAYS BEFORE THE RETURN OF THE GREAT MONSTER GOD, THE WORLD WILL BE DARKNESS. SO THAT HE MAY BREATHE LIFE AND FIRE BACK INTO THE EARTH, THE DAWNING OF A NEW AGE. AN AGE OF MONSTERS."
LAUDO MONSTRUM OMNIPOTENTIS.
IGNORE THEM, SIRE. THEY'RE MEMBERS OF THE DEO MONSTRI CULT. THEY'RE PREDICTING THE END OF THE WORLD. AS THEY DO. IT'S NOTHING.
MAN, I DEAL WITH THE END OF THE WORLD ON A DAILY BASIS. YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO TRY HARDER THAN THAT IF YOU WANT TO GET MY ATTENTION.

YOU SHOULD RECONSIDER, SIRE, AS THE PROPHECY DIRECTLY INVOLVES YOU. TO COMPLETE HIS ASCENSION, GREAT MONSTER GOD MUST DEVOUR THE MONSTER KING, WHICH IS CURRENTLY YOU.
WELL, THAT IS... SLIGHTLY MORE INTERESTING.
WAIT. YOU WANT HIM TO RISE. AND THAT MEANS YOU WANT HIM TO DEVOUR ME.
UH... YES?
THEN WHY ARE YOU EVEN HERE?!
YOU'RE WARNING ME OF SOMETHING YOU PREDICT WILL HAPPEN BUT THAT YOU ALSO WANT TO HAPPEN... WHY EVEN TELL ME?!
UH. WELL, WE JUST WANT SOME ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT WE WERE RIGHT. THAT THE PROPHECY IS COMING TO PASS, AND THAT, Y'KNOW, WE'RE LEGIT.
UNBELIEVABLE. YOU'RE A REAL PIECE OF WORK, Y'KNOW THAT?
BESIDES, YOU'RE NOT RIGHT! THIS ISN'T SOME CULT THING THAT WE'VE ONLY TEASED FOR A LITTLE WHILE IN OUR OWN BOOK. THIS IS A BIG TIE-IN EVENT BOOK--IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR MONSTER GOD!
IT HAS TO DO WITH VENOMS AND SYMBIOTES AND STUFF. READ A COMIC, WHY DON'T YOU!
YOU WILL REGRET THIS, "KING."

SIX AND A HALF MINUTES LATER.
MISTAKES WERE MADE.
AND...ARE STILL BEING MADE?
IT'S ALREADY BAD, BUT... KEEP GOING ANYWAY!
AND DON'T LET IT TOUCH YOU!
HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO KILL IT WITHOUT TOUCHING IT?
TOUCH IT HARDER WITH YOUR WEAPONS!

NOTHING'S GETTING THROUGH, WADE!
TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW!
UH. NOT... COOL.
GULP
NO! NOT MY SNOWMAN!

FOR THE LAST TIME, PEOPLE, YOU CAN'T LET IT TOUCH YOU! THAT INCLUDES SWALLOWING YOU WHOLE!
WADE, THIS ISN'T WORKING.
YOU'RE NOT HERE TO REPEAT ELSA, WOLF!
FWOOM
HOLY #$@%.
WAS THAT SHINY USING HIS WEIRD LIGHT MOUTH?!
IT WAS.
I KNEW I LOVED THAT GUY.
EVERYONE, FALL BACK AND REGROUP!!!
MRRR.

MRRR!
JEFF!
OH NO.
JEFF! IT'S OKAY, I GOT YOU. WE'RE GONNA FIX YOU UP, AND IT'S GONNA BE FINE!
JEFF!
CHOMP
WADE! FOCUS. WE-- WE'LL GET HIM BACK... BUT WE CAN'T LET THIS SYMBIOTE THING GET AHOLD OF YOU-- YOU'RE ********** INDESTRUCTIBLE!
ARGGGGHHHH!

...
Y-YOU'RE INFECTED... WHAT DO I DO?
YOU STAND BACK. I KNOW WHAT TO DO.
NOT TODAY, #$@%#@!
HACK
HACK
YOU THINK I WON'T HACK OFF A LIMB TO KEEP AN EVIL THING FROM GAINING CONTROL OF ME?!
I JUST BLEW MYSELF UP LAST WEEK TO AVOID SUCH A THING... GREW BACK FROM JUST A HEAD!
MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE IT EASY FOR A MINUTE.
TAKE IT EASY, ELSA?! NO. TIME TO REGROUP AND PREP FOR PLAN F.
PLAN F?
YEAH, PLAN $@&%$#&# THIS @#$%&#@$&#$% UP!
SUBTLE.
SUBTLETY IS OVERRATED!

ALL RIGHT, BIG HERO TEAM GROUP SHOT, TAKE TWO! THIS TIME WITH MORE ANGRY FACES! EVERYONE READY FOR--
YOUR HIGHNESS?

WELL, WELL, WELL--IF IT ISN'T JELBY THE TRAITOR, RUINING A PERFECTLY GOOD HERO TEAM WALK.
I KNOW YOU'RE STILL MAD, SIRE*...BUT I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD HELP...
*SEE DEADPOOL #6!
...AND I BROUGHT YOU SOMETHING.
JEFF!
IS HE... HE'S OKAY?
WELL, NO. HE'S COVERED IN WEIRD BLACK GOO, AND HE'S EXTRA MEAN.
BUT HE'S SAFE IN THERE? HE CAN BREATHE?
YEAH, OF COURSE. I'M NOT A MONSTER.
GOOD JOB, JELBY! WELCOME BACK TO THE TEAM. AND YOU'VE GIVEN ME A TERRIFIC IDEA.
ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE. I HOPE YOU'VE PEED AND GOTTEN A DRINK OF WATER BECAUSE WE'RE GOING BACK IN. IT'S TIME FOR PLAN X!
WAIT. WHAT SODDING HAPPENED TO PLAN F?
THAT WAS BEFORE JELBY SHOWED UP.
WHAT'S PLAN X?
NO BLOODY IDEA. I'M JUST GLAD IT ISN'T CALLED PLAN TRIPLE X.

THAT'S RIGHT! WE'RE GONNA HIT THAT STUPID DRAGON WITH THOSE HEAT AND/OR CONCUSSIVE BEAMS THAT HE SEEMS TO HATE AS HARD AS WE CAN! DO IT! DOOOOO IT!

FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
ALL RIGHT, TEAM--IT'S OUR BIG KAIJU VS. KAIJU MOMENT! HOLD YOUR GROUND!
THIS IS SO GREAT. I WANNA BE A DEADPOOL-TRON EVERY DAY!
DEADPOOL-TRON?! YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE IN HERE, YOU WANKER!
FINE... A MEAT-TRON? MONSTER-TRON? YEAH. MONSTER-TRON. TRADEMARK PENDING!
I CAN'T BELIEVE ZRRGO JUST PROPELLED US VIA AN ENERGY BLAST FROM OUR BUTT. I FEEL LIKE ALL MY DREAMS ARE COMING TRUE.

THAT'S RIGHT--HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING! HE HATES IT!
HE FELT THAT IN HIS SHORT AND CURLIES...OR HIS GOO AND MORE GOO!
FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
FWOOM
NOW GIVE HIM THE OL' CONCUSSIVE BLASTS PLUS UPPERCUT!
KAPOW

YES! NOW PUSH HIM TOWARD THE SINKHOLE! USE OUR BUTT POWER!
KRAK
FWOOM
SINKHOLE OR DEATH!
BIT EXTREME, PERHAPS?
NOPE!

IT'S WORKING!
YOU KNOW WE'RE IN HERE TOO AND ACTUALLY BLOODY HELPING YOU DO IT AND CAN SEE EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENING, RIGHT?!
I'M JUST TRYING TO KEEP UP MORALE!
NOW SHUT UP UNTIL YOU'RE IN THE HEAD!
SUPER PUNCH
JELBY! YOU CAN GET AS BIG AS YOU NEED TO, RIGHT?
WELL, I'VE NEVER TESTED--
GREAT. I'VE GOT AN IDEA... HOLD ON.
FWOOM
FWOOM
HA! YES! YOU WERE JUST OWNED, GOOEY DRAGON SYMBIOTE THING!
MAN, I HATE FIGHTING THINGS WITHOUT REAL NAMES... IT'S SO MESSY. I LIKE MY DIALOGUE TO POP!
HOW ARE WE GOING TO KEEP IT IN THERE, WADE? FOR STARTERS, IT HAS SODDING WINGS!
#$@%. THE WINGS. I FORGOT.

WE HAVE TO BLOCK THE OPENING SOMEHOW!
NOBODY SAID YOU COULDN'T HAVE IDEAS, ELSA, BUT LEMME KNOW WHEN YOU KNOW WHAT WE WOULD USE TO BLOCK THE OPENING...
WAIT. WHY--WHY DOES THIS SEEM SO FAMILIAR?
WHAT?!
DAMMIT!
WADE!
HEY, I--I GOTTA TELL YOU SOMETHING REAL QUICK...BEFORE IT GETS ME.
NOT NOW, WADE!
IT'S GOTTA BE NOW, BABE. IT'S THE WHOLE PLAN...

I...I UNDERSTAND. BUT, WADE...
WADE, I...
WADE!

WADE! HOLD ON!
THAT'S RIGHT, SAVVY READER, YOU WERE RIGHT--YOU DID REMEMBER MOST OF THE LAST PAGE FROM A PREVIOUS ISSUE... THIS PAGE TOO!
BUT WE'RE NOT TRYING TO RIP YOU OFF, I SWEAR--IT'S JUST ABOUT CONNECTING THINGS. WE WERE DOING A THING CALLED SLOW BUILD STORYTELLING...BUT THINGS GET CANCELED, AND THAT #$@%# THINGS UP, SO YOU GOTTA PIVOT.
BUT THIS IS A PRETTY #@$%#@$ GREAT PIVOT, AMIRIGHT? TYING EVERYTHING TOGETHER.
MAKING IT LOOK LIKE WE PREDICTED THIS MOMENT WHEN WE WROTE THIS SCENE WAY BACK WHEN WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WE WERE GONNA BE AN EVENT TIE-IN ISSUE. PRETTY COOL, RIGHT? YEAH, WE'RE PROS.
IT HELPS THAT YOU CAN'T THROW A ROCK FIFTY FEET IN NYC WITHOUT HITTING A FREAKING DRAGON...SO PRETTY SAFE WRITING ONE IN TEN MONTHS AGO.
PLUS THE WRITER DID ALL THIS SHINY NEW DIALOGUE, SEE?
SO NOW IT'S, LIKE, A...WHOLE NEW THING.

EVERYONE, STAY BACK...HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING.
I'M ALMOST SURE.
SEE? A THUMBS UP. THAT'S... REASSURING?
YOU ARE TERRIBLE AT OPTIMISM.

JELBY... THAT'S...THAT'S AMAZING.
THANKS.
DID YOU... DID YOU SEE WADE DOWN THERE?
OH YEAH, I GOT HIM. HE'S GOOD. WELL, HE'S MEDIUM-GOOD.
JELBY. YOU'RE A PEACH. LITERALLY MY FAVORITE CITIZEN.
YOU FEEL OKAY THOUGH? THAT THING IS SECURE IN THERE?
KINDA TICKLES.
IS MISTER FROSTY IN THERE TOO?
HARD TO SAY... IF HE IS, I'LL FIND HIM.
AMAZING. NOW. LET'S GO DEAL WITH MY BOY.

GRRRRRR
YEAH, YEAH-- "GRRRRR" ALL YOU LIKE. WE'RE GETTING THAT NONSENSE OFF YOU, YOUNG MAN!
WADE, THIS SPEAKER IS OBSCENE.
IT SURE IS. I *TOLD* YOU SOME MUSICIANS WHO THINK FONDLY OF THE ISLAND FORMERLY KNOWN AS STATEN WOULD APPRECIATE MY SAVING THEIR BELOVED STOMPING GROUNDS. THE SPEAKER'S A LOANER. AND THAT SOUND LEVEL PLUS ALL OF YOUR CONCUSSIVE BLASTS...? IT'S GONNA WORK.
YOU SURE?
...YES.
ON MY MARK...
MARK!

FWOOOM
I TAUGHT HIM ALL ABOUT THE BEES AND BIRDS.
BUT I WISH I HAD A CHANCE TO SAY THESE THREE WORDS...
OKAY, ENOUGH!
MRRR?
HEY, BUDDY, YOU FEEL OKAY?
MRRRR.
SOMEONE PUT THAT BLOWN-OFF GOO IN A BAGGIE UNTIL WE CAN GET IT INSIDE JELBY!

HE OKAY?
HE'LL BE OKAY. HE'S TOUGH.
MRRRR.
IT'S LITERALLY THE SECOND TIME HE'S BEEN EATEN. MAYBE...MAYBE YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT...A BETTER SOLUTION?
CAN YOU NOT LET US HAVE ONE MOMENT OF PEACE?! JUST A MOMENT IS ALL I ASK, WOMAN!
SIRE...THERE'S A RATHER LARGE LINE AMASSING IN YOUR THRONE ROOM.
IS IT TO CELEBRATE OUR BIG WIN? TO SHOWER ME WITH PRAISE AND SHINY GIFTS, I HOPE?
MOSTLY I OVERHEARD COMPLAINTS ABOUT PROPERTY DAMAGE, AND, OF COURSE THERE'S THE LEADER OF THE DEO MONSTR! CULT WAITING TO LET YOU KNOW THAT THEY MADE SOME MISTAKES IN THEIR CALCULATIONS, AND THEY GOT MONSTER ARMAGEDDON WRONG. APPARENTLY THE MONSTER GOD WILL BE COMING FOR YOU IN 2022.
GREAT! PENCIL HIM IN. HIM AND ANYONE ELSE THAT WANTS A PIECE.
I LITERALLY JUST SAVED US! WOULD IT KILL PEOPLE TO JUST BE HAPPY AND SHOWER ME WITH GIFTS? JUST ONCE! AM I ASKING FOR THE MOON HERE?!

SAVAGE AVENGERS #48 VARIANT BY
SUPERLOG

SAVAGE AVENGERS #50 TWO-TONE VARIANT BY
MICHAEL CHO

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1 VARIANT BY
KYLE HOTZ & DAN BROWN

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1 VARIANT BY
TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1

When ANDI BENSON was in high school, she had no idea that her gym teacher FLASH THOMPSON was really VENOM. After a brief stint as his sidekick, Andi was later targeted by the psychotic serial killer CARNAGE. Only through the intervention of an orphaned offspring of the Venom symbiote did Andi survive. Now, bonded as one, she and the symbiote protect the innocent with extreme prejudice as the creature called...

SCREAM

CLAY McLEOD CHAPMAN WRITER
GUIU VILANOVA ARTIST
DEAN WHITE COLORIST
DEVIN LEWIS EDITOR

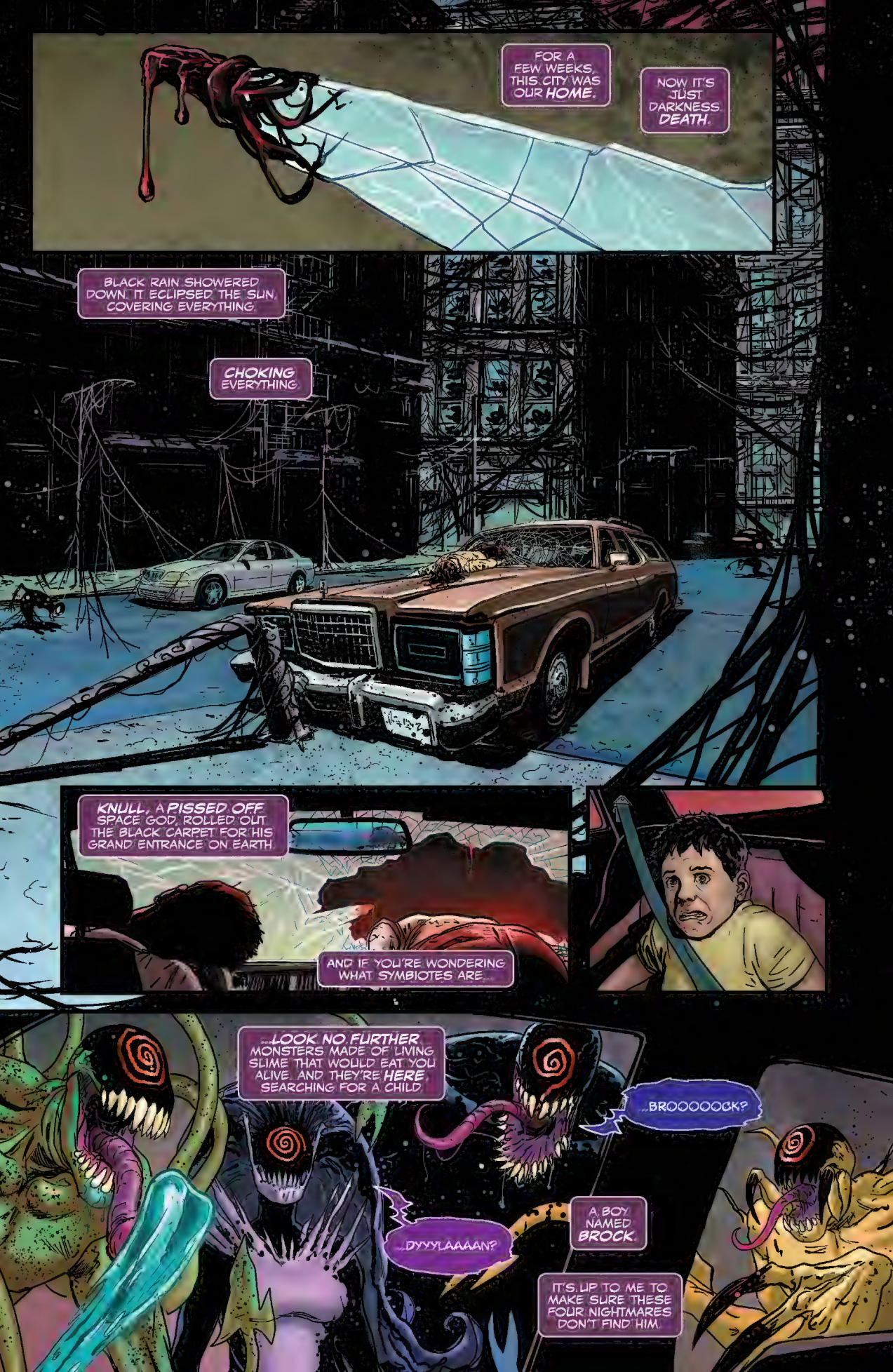
New York is a city full of superhuman, extraterrestrial and ordinary criminals. Many are deemed fit to serve their time in ordinary prisons. But a small few of the Marvel Universe's criminals are either too violent or too unstable to be housed in standard penitentiaries.

In those cases, the guilty are sent for rehabilitation to...

RAVENCROFT
INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE

FRANK TIERI WRITER
DANILO S. BEYRUTH ARTIST
RACHELLE ROSENBERG COLORIST
DANNY KHAZEM EDITOR

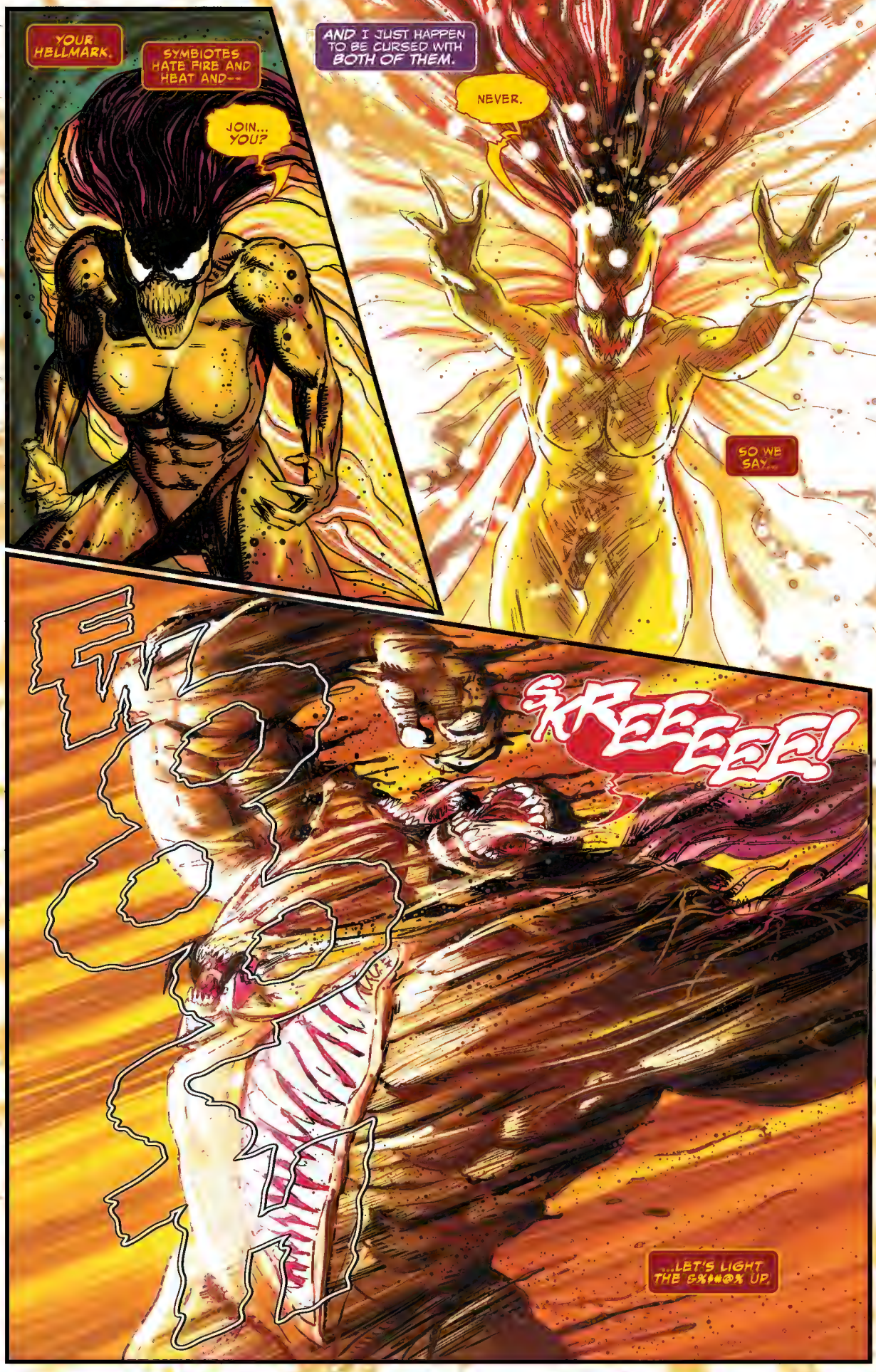
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
TONY MOORE COVER ART


FOR A FEW WEEKS, THIS CITY WAS OUR HOME.
NOW IT'S JUST DARKNESS. DEATH.
BLACK RAIN SHOWERED DOWN. IT ECLIPSED THE SUN, COVERING EVERYTHING.
CHOKING EVERYTHING.
KNULL, A PISSED OFF SPACE GOD, ROLLED OUT THE BLACK CARPET FOR HIS GRAND ENTRANCE ON EARTH.
AND IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT SYMBIOTES ARE...
...LOOK NO FURTHER. MONSTERS MADE OF LIVING SLIME THAT WOULD EAT YOU ALIVE. AND THEY'RE HERE, SEARCHING FOR A CHILD.
...BROOOOOCK?
A BOY NAMED BROCK.
...DYYYLAAAAN?
IT'S UP TO ME TO MAKE SURE THESE FOUR NIGHTMARES DON'T FIND HIM.

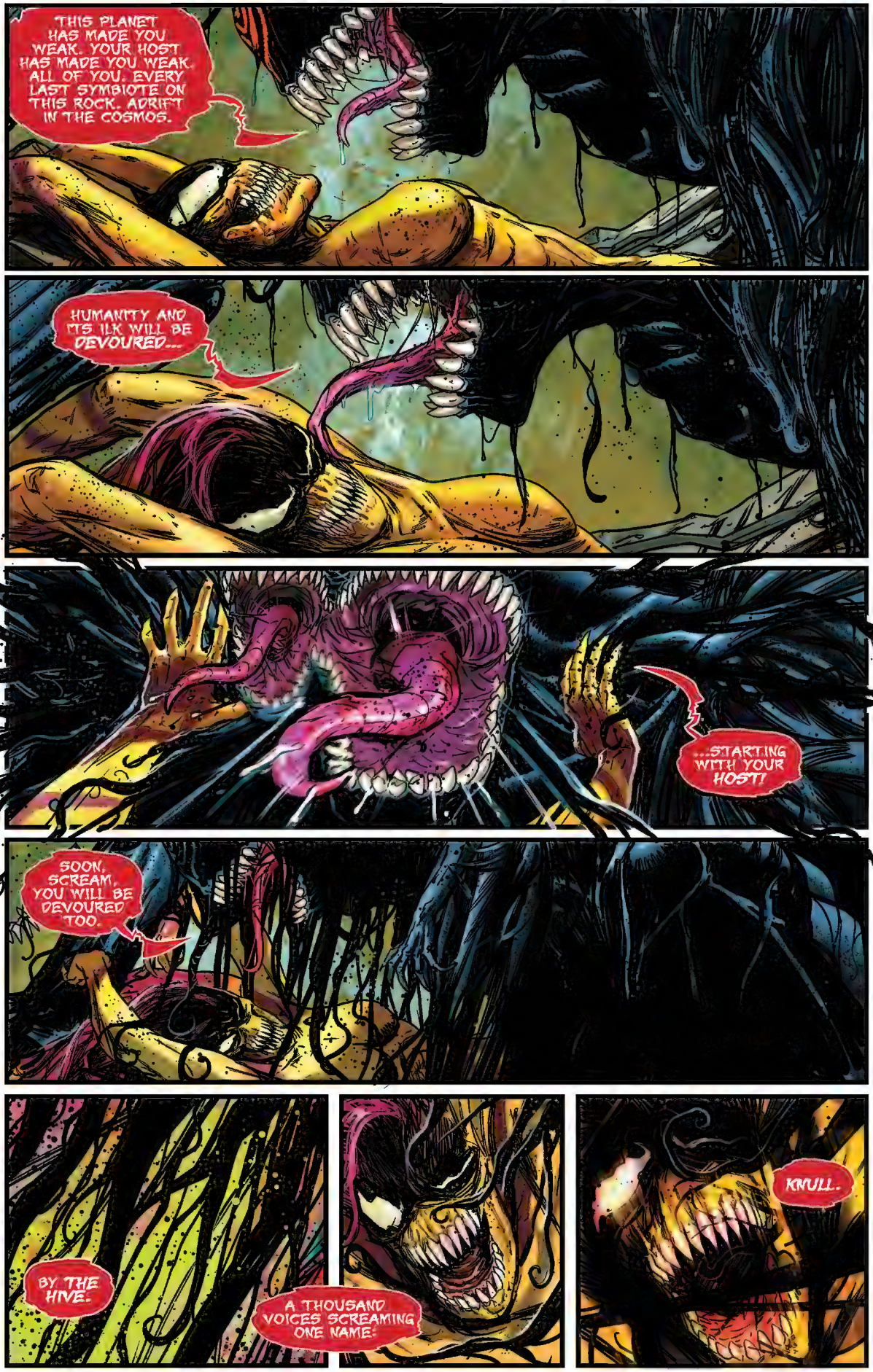
CRRRRSH
WRONG KID. NOW THIS BOY WILL BE ALONE FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE. ORPHANED.
TOO MANY ORPHANS IN THIS WORLD.
CRRR SSH
AAAAAAAAH!
RIOT.
AGONY.
LASHER.
NNOT DYYLAAAAN...
PHAGE.
PLEEEEASE...
HELP MEE!
OURS TO EEEEEAT--
WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

AAACK!
A FAMILY REUNION...
THIS CHILD IS NOT FOR--
--YOU.
YOU! FORSSSAKE YOUR OWN...
...TO HELP THEM?
POOOR SSCREEEAM.
SSSOOOON THERE WILL BE NOTHING LEFT TO PROTEECT
NOTHING AT ALL

AH, YESSSS, THERE YOU ARE.
WE KNEW IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU CAME TO EARTH.
WE CAN FEEL HIM, ANDI. HE'S REACHING OUT THROUGH THE SYMBIOTES.
STILL HIDING BEHIND YOUR CHILDREN, I SEE.
SUCH A VEXING CHILD. I WONDERED WHEN OUR PATHS MIGHT CROSS AGAIN...
TIME TO RETURN TO THE HIVE, WHERE YOU RIGHTFULLY BELONG.
TIME TO COME HOME, SCREAM.
JOIN USSSSS.


YOUR HELLMARK.
SYMBIOTES HATE FIRE AND HEAT AND--
JOIN... YOU?
AND I JUST HAPPEN TO BE CURSED WITH BOTH OF THEM.
NEVER.
SO WE SAY...
SKREEEE!
...LET'S LIGHT THE S%!#@% UP.

WE HAVE TRAVELED ACROSS THE STARS...
...THROUGH THE VOID OF SSPACE...
...AND WE HAVE BROUGHT ITS DARKNESS WITH US.
CRRNCH
THERE IS A DARKNESSS WITHIN YOU, ISN'T THERE?
YESSSS...


THIS PLANET HAS MADE YOU WEAK. YOUR HOST HAS MADE YOU WEAK. ALL OF YOU. EVERY LAST SYMBIOTE ON THIS ROCK. ADRIFT IN THE COSMOS.
HUMANITY AND ITS ILK WILL BE DEVOURED...
...STARTING WITH YOUR HOST!
SOON, SCREAM, YOU WILL BE DEVOURED TOO.
BY THE HIVE.
A THOUSAND VOICES SCREAMING ONE NAME:
KNULL.

YEEESSSSSSSS!
SSUUCH A TASTY MORSEL... CAN FEEL ITS...
FEEL IT...
=HUULCH=
WHAT IS...
=HHUUULP=
WHAT IS HAAAAPPENING TO--

WHOOO

TIME TO BRING THIS FIGHT RIGHT TO KNULL... BUT FIRST...
...WE PROTECT THOSE WHO CAN'T PROTECT THEMSELVES.
IT'S OKAY. WE'RE NOT GONNA HURT YOU.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME, KID?
...DANNY.
I'M ANDI.
YOU'RE SAFE NOW, DANNY. I GOT YOU.
END.

SO LET ME ASK YA THIS... WHAT DO YA THINK OF JAMESON?
RAVENCROFT
OR SHOULD I SAY...THE WERE-WARDEN?
I DUNNO. HE SEEMS LIKE A DECENT ENOUGH GUY...WEREWOLF STUFF ASIDE.
AND HEY, THINGS HAVE DEFINITELY BEEN A LOT CALMER AROUND HERE THAN WHEN FISK WAS RUNNING THINGS, YOU KNOW?
NO SUPER VILLAINS ON STAFF, NO MASS INMATE BREAKOUTS, NO VAMPIRE MUTANT REFUGEES FROM THE '60s HOLDING THE JOINT HOSTAGE...
THAT...WAS SOMETHING, YEAH.
HEY...
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT? LOOKS LIKE IT'S HEADING THIS WAY. LIKE A PLANE. OR A...A...

WHAT THE #$%&?
DRAGONS?! WE'VE GOTTA GET--
BOB?
SPLAAAT
FOR DAYS AND DAYS, WE HAVE WAITED. THE CULT OF KNULL.
THE EMISSARY WAS HIDDEN, AND STILL WE WAITED!
CRAC
CRAC
WAITED FOR THE RIGHT MOMENT. BUT AT LONG LAST--
THE TIME IS NOW!
GOD IS NO LONGER COMING! GOD--
UNWANTED
SWOOOSH

IS HERE.

M-M-MY LORD, KNULL... YOU HONOR ME WITH YOUR PRESENCE. I MERELY CAME TO RETRIEVE THE BODY SO THAT WE, YOUR HUMBLE SERVANTS, COULD PROPERLY PREPARE FOR YOUR ARRIVAL...
SO THAT THE CULT COULD BEGIN THE RESURRECTION PROCESS.
NO NEED, MY CHILD.
DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS MAN IS? DO YOU TRULY KNOW?
HE...HE WAS CORTLAND KASADY, THE NEW WORLD'S FIRST SERIAL KILLER.
GO
IS
COM
OH, HE WAS MUCH MORE THAN THAT. IN ALL MY EONS OF EXISTENCE, IN ALL MY COUNTLESS TRAVELS...
...NONE SPREAD MORE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION...
NONE SPREAD MORE DARKNESS IN MY NAME...
...THAN HE DID. AND NOW, AFTER ALL THESE CENTURIES...

...HE WILL SERVE ME ONCE AGAIN IN A NEW, GREATER CAPACITY.
BLEECH
AND SO...
...HE WHO HAS GIVEN HIS BODY AND SOUL TO ME...
...I NOW GIVE UNTO HIM.
ARISE, CORTLAND KASADY!

ARISE, PLAGUE!
NOW, I'M AFRAID I MUST TAKE MY LEAVE, AS MY ATTENTION IS REQUIRED ELSEWHERE. BUT BEFORE I DO, I WILL POSE THIS QUESTION TO YOU, MY CHILD...
WHAT ARE YOU PREPARED TO GIVE TO OUR CAUSE?
WHY, ALL THAT I CAN OFFER, MY LORD. EVERYTHING THAT IS...-KAF! KAF!-
WHAT IS... -KAF! KAF!-
...FOR YOU SEE...
...ALL THAT YOU CAN OFFER IS WHAT IS REQUIRED.
IT'S... GOOD... TO BE...
WHOOSH
EXCELLENT TO HEAR, MY CHILD...
CLIC CLIC CLIC

...BACK!
YOU'RE NOT GONNA BE BACK FOR LONG IF YOU DON'T FREEZE, WHATEVER THE HELL YOU ARE.
STEP AWAY FROM--
-KAF! KAF!-
HEH HEH. I DO SO LOVE IT WHEN THE MEAT TALKS TOUGH.
-KAF! KAF!-
-KAF! KAF!-
MY, THE PEOPLE OF THIS CENTURY ARE RATHER TASTY, AREN'T THEY?
WOOO

YOU INTO GETTING YOUR THROAT RIPPED OUT BY A SPACE WEREWOLF? THEN, YEAH.
I DON'T KNOW WHO OR WHAT THE HELL YOU--
WAIT A SEC... I DO KNOW YOU. YOU'RE CORTLAND KASADY.
BUT... HOW DO I KNOW THAT?
THE SAME WAY I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, JOHN JAMESON.
:KAF! KAF!:
THROUGH OUR CONNECTION WITH OUR LORD, KNULL.
IT'S HOW I KNOW THAT YOU BETRAYED HIM.
:KAF! KAF! KAF! KAF!:
GLAD YOU'VE ALREADY GOT THE LAY OF THE LAND, FREAK SHOW...
WACK

THIS WAY YA ALREADY KNOW WHO'S ABOUT TO KICK YOUR ASS!
A WOMAN WITH A METAL ARM! TRULY THIS IS A WONDERFUL WORLD I'VE AWOKEN TO!
WELL... PERHAPS NOT SO WONDERFUL FOR YOU NOW.
WHOOOSH
-KAF! KAF!- MISTY! BE CAREFUL...-KAF!-... HIS POWERS...
HE'S... -KAF! KAF!- DRAINING OUR... -KAF! KAF!-
MORE OF YOU? AH, WOULD THAT I COULD STAY AND DRAIN EACH OF YOU TO THE BONE. BUT ALAS,
CLICK
-KAF! KAF! KAF!-
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
-KAF!- LIFE...-KAF! KAF!-
CLICK
CLICK
-KAF! KAF! KAF!-

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE AS MY LORD DEMANDS MY PRESENCE ELSEWHERE. FOR YOU SEE...
IT'S TIME I COMPLETE THE MISSION AT HAND. IT'S TIME I AVENGED MY BLOODLINE.
AND KILLED THE ONE CALLED BROCK.
I'VE SAID IT BEFORE, AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN...
I HATE THIS #$%& PLACE.
OH, BELIEVE ME, MISTY...THIS GUY? WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE...?
THIS ISN'T JUST A RAVENCROFT PROBLEM.
NOTIFY OUR SUPERIORS. WE HAVE A NEW TARGET.

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #2

Corporal TODD ZILLER put his life on the line for his country as a test subject for a new iteration of the Super-Soldier Serum. Using elements ranging from gamma radiation to Pym Particles to Curt Connors' Lizard formula, the serum gave Todd the ability to transform into a reptile-like behemoth. He protects the land of the free and home of the brave as...

AMERICAN KAIJU!

MARC BERNARDIN WRITER
KYLE HOTZ ARTIST
RACHELLE ROSENBERG COLORIST
DEVIN LEWIS EDITOR

HOBIE BROWN was once the villain known as the PROWLER. After a few clashes with the hero SPIDER-MAN, Hobie turned his brilliant mind and inventive skills toward doing good. Now working for the FAIRGRAY PAY COMPANY, Hobie plans to do even more good for the world at large as...

HORNET

GEOFFREY THORNE WRITER
JAN BAZALDUA ARTIST
RACHELLE ROSENBERG COLORIST
DANNY KHAZEM EDITOR

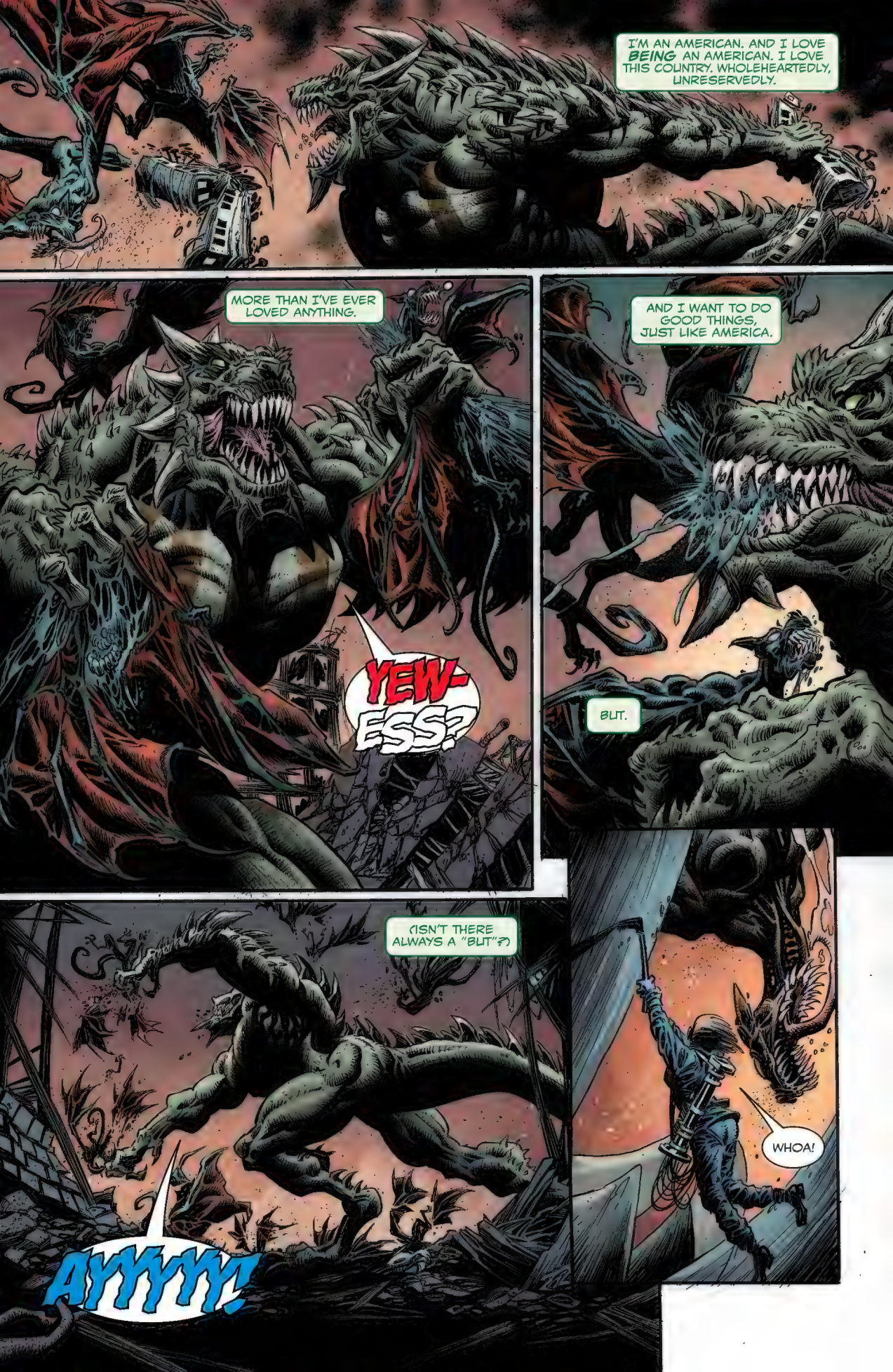
VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
TONY MOORE COVER ART

THERE COMES A TIME IN EVERY MAN'S LIFE...
YEWWWWW!
...WHEN HE LOOKS BACK ON THE THINGS HE'S DONE AND THE CHOICES HE'S MADE...
ESSSS!
...AND HE HAS TO ANSWER FOR HIMSELF ONE QUESTION...
AAAAYYY!
PETROL
SANDMAN ONE IS A GO!

...AM I A MONSTER?
YEWWWW-
ESSSS-
AYYYY!
CORPORAL TODD ZILLER
UNITED STATES ARMY. WILLING TEST SUBJECT FOR A RAMSHACKLE SUPER-SOLDIER KNOCKOFF. NOW HE'S USUALLY THE AMERICAN KAIJU. BECAUSE WHY WOULDN'T HE BE?

BECAUSE HERE'S THE THING: I WANTED THIS.
I WANTED POWER.
LIFE AS TODD ZILLER WAS EMPTY, SHALLOW.
I WANTED PURPOSE. I WANTED TO MANIFEST A DESTINY.
WHIPPP
YEWWWW!
ESSSS!
AYYYY!
SO I VOLUNTEERED FOR...THIS.
I'M ON THE TARGET, WHICH IS JUST RIPPING THROUGH SYMBIOTE DRAGONS!

THIS IS WHAT THE MILITARY WANTED ME TO BE. OR, AT LEAST, WHAT THE MILITARY WAS FINE WITH ME BECOMING.
AMERICA WANTED ANOTHER STAR-SPANGLED DELIVERER.
SOMETIMES, AMERICA CUTS A FEW CORNERS.
YEWWWW!
ESSSS!
AYYYY!


I'M AN AMERICAN. AND I LOVE BEING AN AMERICAN. I LOVE THIS COUNTRY. WHOLEHEARTEDLY, UNRESERVEDLY.
MORE THAN I'VE EVER LOVED ANYTHING.
YEW-ESS?
AND I WANT TO DO GOOD THINGS, JUST LIKE AMERICA.
BUT.
(ISN'T THERE ALWAYS A "BUT"?)
AYYYY!
WHOA!

THEY SET ME LOOSE ON THESE SYMBIOTE DRAGONS BECAUSE, YEAH, SYMBIOTE DRAGONS NEED TO BE DEALT WITH.
FOR THE GOOD OF EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING...
YEW... ESSS... AYYY.
...EXCEPT MAYBE THE SYMBIOTE DRAGONS.
OH %&#$...

BUT IN THE PROCESS, I'M GOING TO DESTROY EVERYTHING I TOUCH.
GROCERY STORES, HAIR SALONS, URGENT CARE, LIBRARIES, SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS AND, YEAH, STREET FAIRS FULL OF FAMILIES.
YEWWWWW-
ESSSS-
AYYYYY!
ALMOST THERE... HANG IN THERE, TODD.

I WILL LEAVE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES RUINED. AND WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS DESTRUCTION? IS IT THE DRAGONS?
IS IT AMERICA, FOR DROPPING ME OUT OF A PLANE?
IS IT AMERICA, FOR TURNING ME INTO THIS?

IF I TAKE A HARSH LOOK AT MYSELF, HERE'S THE TRUTH: I WANTED THIS. I ASKED FOR IT. I VOLUNTEERED FOR IT.

YEWWWW-
ESSSS-
AYYYYY!
THERE'S NO ONE TO BLAME BUT ME.
BWASSSST

YEW!!!
SO, DOES DOING THE THINGS I'VE DONE MAKE ME A MONSTER?
ESSSSSS?
OR AM I A MONSTER FOR WANTING TO BE ONE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
AWWW...
www...
YOU DID GREAT, BUDDY. LET'S GET YOU HOME-- AND WHEN YOU WAKE UP, MOZZ STICKS ARE ON ME.
OO-RAH.
THE END...

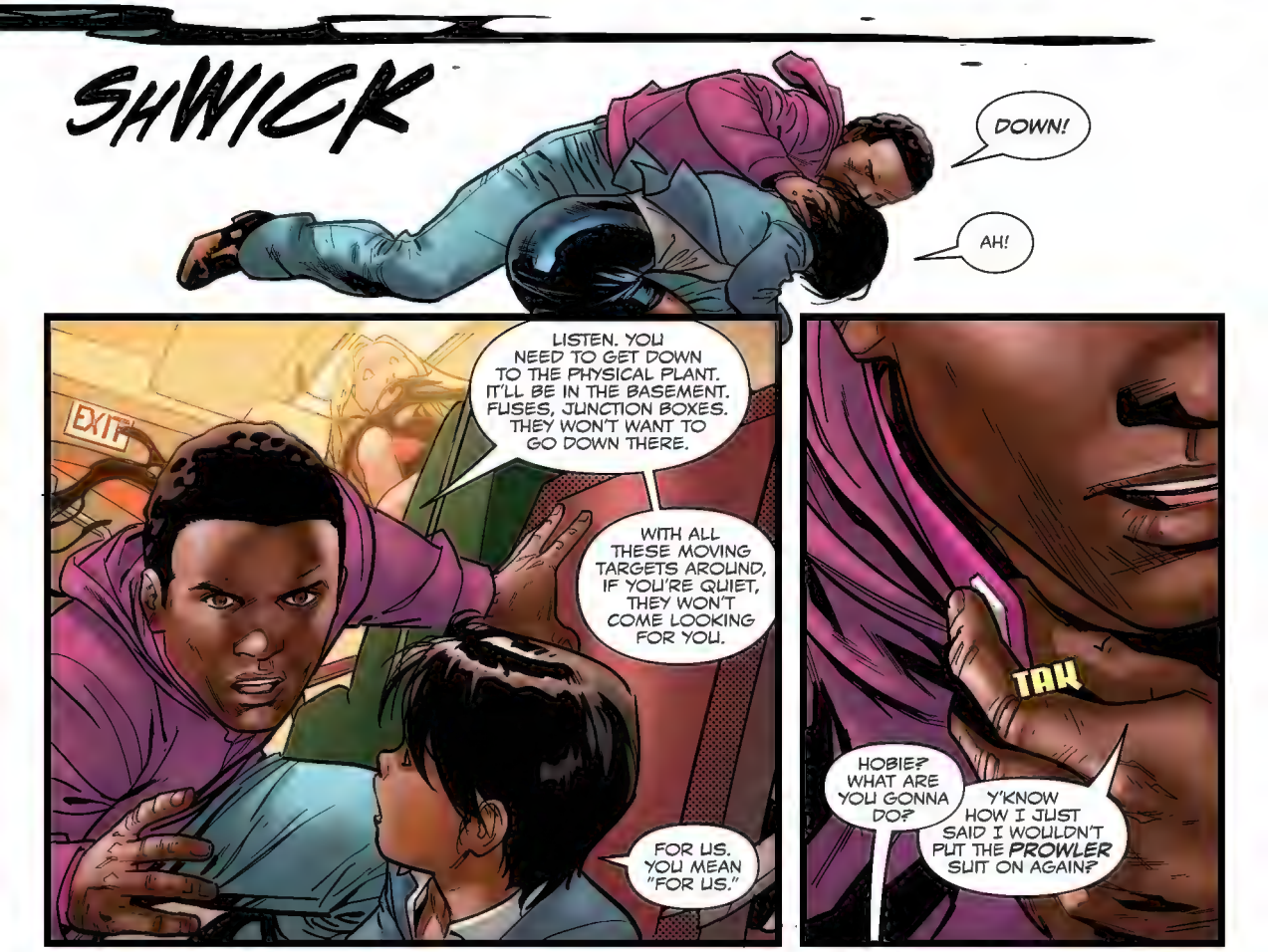
TAVERN ON THE GREEN.
OKAY, HOBIE, LET ME SEE IF I UNDERSTAND...
LOOK, I KNOW IT'S A LOT.
DEFINITELY. YOU ARE DEFINITELY A LOT.
TEACHING YOURSELF TO BE AN INVENTOR WAS AN IDEA. THE PROWLER WAS AN IDEA.
YOU ALWAYS HAVE AN IDEA. THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH YOU.
BUT YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT IT. I CAN TELL YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT IT.
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH ME.
YOU WANTED ME TO GIVE UP BEING THE PROWLER.
BOOM. DONE.
YOU WANTED ME TO USE MY TALENTS IN THE "REAL WORLD"? IT DOESN'T GET REALER THAN FAIRGRAY PAY.*
I WANTED YOU OUT OF THE SUIT, HOBIE.
*CHECK OUT THE RECENT FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN #7-10 FOR THE DETAILS! --DK
THE SUIT'S GONE, BABY. I SWEAR. NO MORE PROWLER. EVER. BUT THIS OTHER THING...
...HOBIE, WHAT'S...

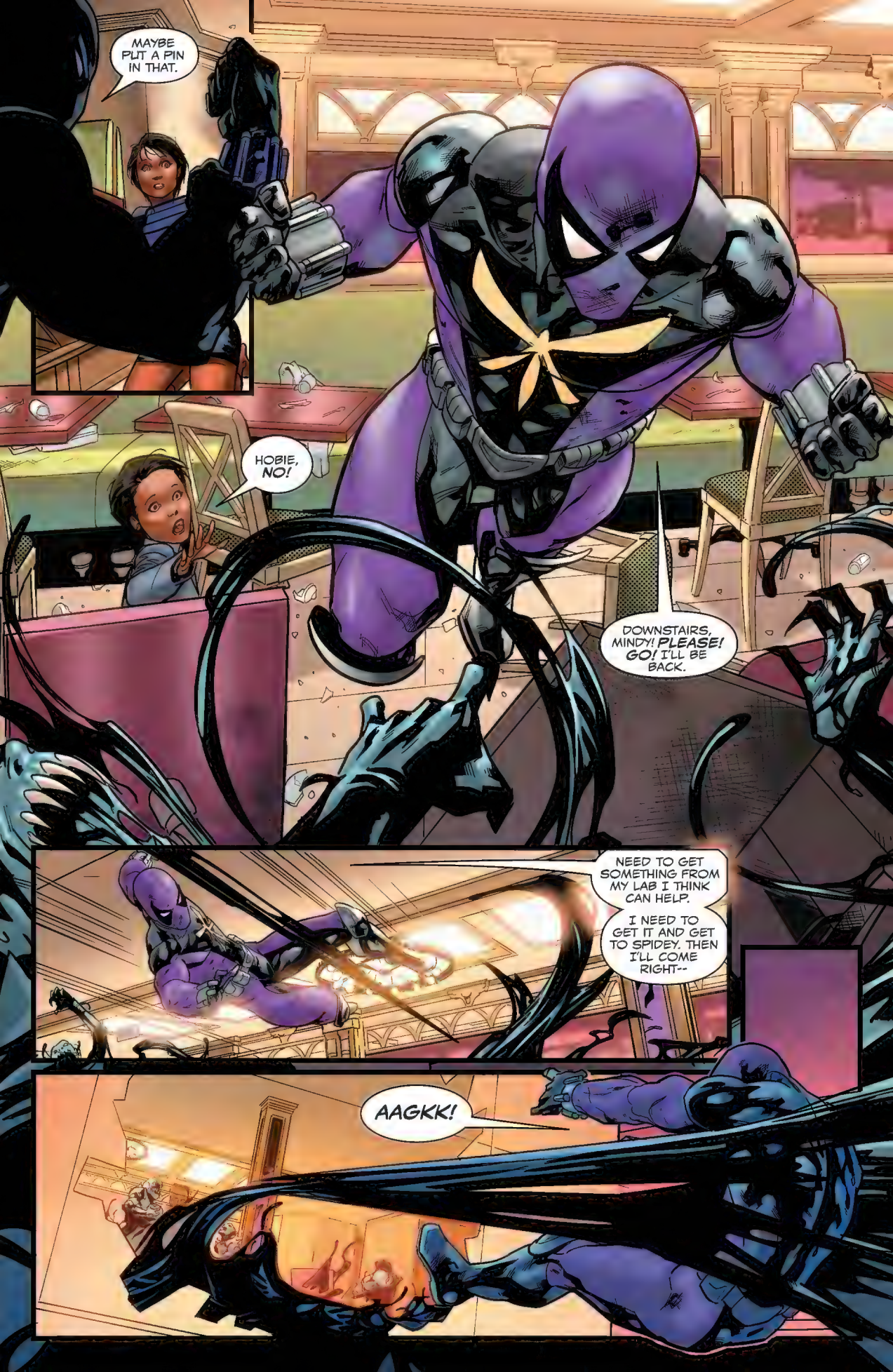
YEARGHH!
...WHAT'S HAPPENING?
OFF!
OFF!
GET IT OFF ME!

...SYMBIOTES...
THOSE ARE... THAT'S A HELL OF A LOT OF SYMBIOTES.
SYM-- WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU--?
YOU REMEMBER THAT MONSTER, VENOM, WHO USED TO ATTACK SPIDER-MAN?
UM...NO? EVERYBODY ATTACKS SPIDER-MAN. "VENOM"?
EVERYBODY, GET AWAY FROM THE WINDOWS! SOMEBODY KILL THE MUSIC IN HERE AND CLOSE THESE CURTAINS!
NOW!
HEY! JUST WHO ARE YOU TO BE GIVING ORDERS, MISTER? I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW--
EXIT
ALEX, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DUDE, ARE YOU NUTS? DO YOU NOT SEE WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?
"DUDE"? DID YOU JUST CALL ME "DUDE"? WHAT ARE YOU, A BIKE MESSENGER? I OWN THREE CONDOS ON THE UPPER EAST SIDE. WHY IN THE HELL AM I LISTENING TO--

KE-KASH
GET DOWN!
AAAAAH!
OH. OH MY LORD.
WHAT THE HELL AM I-- WHAT THE HELL AM I--
WHGL MLL LIGGLMM!!
AGGGGLLL!

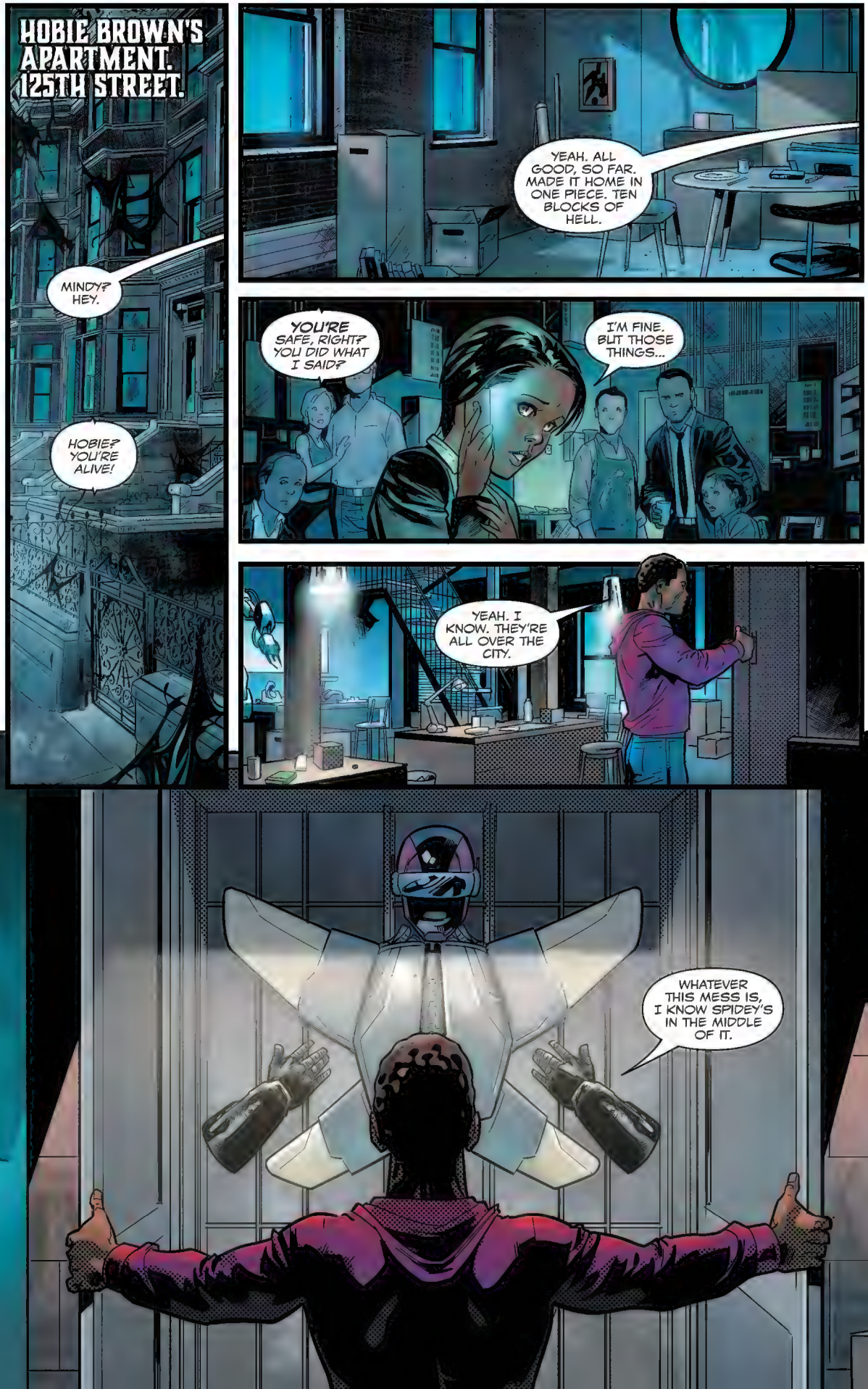
COME ON! THERE'S NO TIME!
BUT WHERE? HOBIE, WHAT'S HAPPENING?
LOOKS LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD. AGAIN. SPIDEY TOLD ME ABOUT THESE THINGS.
THEY DON'T LIKE FIRE... ELECTRICITY...


SHWICK
DOWN!
AH!
EXIT
LISTEN. YOU NEED TO GET DOWN TO THE PHYSICAL PLANT. IT'LL BE IN THE BASEMENT. FUSES, JUNCTION BOXES. THEY WON'T WANT TO GO DOWN THERE.
WITH ALL THESE MOVING TARGETS AROUND, IF YOU'RE QUIET, THEY WON'T COME LOOKING FOR YOU.
FOR US. YOU MEAN "FOR US."
TAK
HOBIE? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
Y'KNOW HOW I JUST SAID I WOULDN'T PUT THE PROWLER SUIT ON AGAIN?


MAYBE PUT A PIN IN THAT.
HOBIE, NO!
DOWNSTAIRS, MINDY! PLEASE! GO! I'LL BE BACK.
NEED TO GET SOMETHING FROM MY LAB I THINK CAN HELP.
I NEED TO GET IT AND GET TO SPIDEY. THEN I'LL COME RIGHT--
AAGKK!

KRAAASH!
OKAY, THAT HURT. DEFINITELY NEED SOME ARMOR AND PADDING.
UPSIDE. SILICONE NANOMESH FABRIC REPELS FLUIDS, INCLUDING INVASIVE ALIEN GOO MOMENTARILY.
SO... THANKS?
SPIDEY TOLD ME ABOUT THE OTHER THING YOU GUYS DON'T LIKE. SOUND.
SPECIFICALLY, HIGH FREQUENCIES.
I GUESS IT SCREWS UP YOUR ABILITY TO COHERE OR SOMETHING, AT A MOLECULAR LEVEL.
THE THING IS, STARKPHONES JUST UPGRADED THEIR AUDIO OUTPUTS.
AND I'VE BEEN HACKING STARKPHONES SINCE I WAS A KID.
TAK TAK TIK TAK TIK
NOW, SINCE YOU ALL DID ME THE SOLID OF COMING INSIDE REAL CLOSE...
Playlist

BONG BONG BONG
BONG BA BONG BONG
BONG
I'M GONNA HIT YOU WITH SOME OF MAHLER'S SYMPHONY NO. 2...
...AND ROCK THE BELLS.
YEAH.
BONG BONG BA BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG
HAD A FEELING.


HOBIE BROWN'S APARTMENT. 125TH STREET.
MINDY? HEY.
HOBIE? YOU'RE ALIVE!
YEAH. ALL GOOD, SO FAR. MADE IT HOME IN ONE PIECE. TEN BLOCKS OF HELL.
YOU'RE SAFE, RIGHT? YOU DID WHAT I SAID?
I'M FINE. BUT THOSE THINGS...
YEAH. I KNOW. THEY'RE ALL OVER THE CITY.
WHATEVER THIS MESS IS, I KNOW SPIDEY'S IN THE MIDDLE OF IT.

AND THE HORNET'S GONNA HELP HIM CLEAN IT UP.

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #3

TANDY BOWEN and TYRONE JOHNSON met as teenage runaways in New York City. Preyed upon by chemist SIMON MARSHALL, they were forced into an experimental drug trial that gave them super-powers. Tandy developed the ability to generate and manipulate light while Tyrone's body became a conduit for the Darkforce Dimension. The two banded together to fight crime as…

CLOAK AND DAGGER

RODNEY BARNES WRITER
DANILO S. BEYRUTH ARTIST
RACHELLE ROSENBERG COLORIST

The symbiote spawn of CARNAGE was once bonded to New York City police officer PATRICK MULLIGAN; together they followed a heroic path inspired by SPIDER-MAN. After Patrick's demise, the symbiote bonded with VENOM host EDDIE BROCK for a brief time before vanishing. But in the chaos of KNULL's invasion, the creature has resurfaced, bonded to a new host in teenager DREN WATERS. Together, they are…

TOXIN

STEVE ORLANDO WRITER
GERARDO SANDOVAL WITH VICTOR NAVA ARTISTS
ERICK ARCINIEGA COLORIST

VC's CORY PETIT LETTERER
PHILIP TAN & SEBASTIAN CHENG COVER ART
DANNY KHAZEM & DEVIN LEWIS EDITORS
NICK LOWE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

FROM THE DEPTHS OF SPACE, A DARKNESS HAS ENVELOPED OUR WORD, DRIVING HUMANITY INTO A STATE OF NEAR-MADNESS.
MY NAME IS TANDY BOWEN, AND ALTHOUGH I CARRY THE MONIKER OF DAGGER, THE SHARDS OF LIGHT I WIELD FEEL OBTUSE IN THE MIDST OF COMPLETE DARKNESS.
THIS IS NOT A MERE ABSENCE OF LIGHT...
...RATHER, THE SOUL OF HUMANITY BEING TORN FROM ITS CHASSIS.
TIMES SQUARE.
GOOD VERSUS EVIL IS A PRIMAL CONCEPT IN THE UNIVERSE.
WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK.
ONE THAT HAS MAINTAINED A UNIQUE BALANCE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME.
WE NOW FIND OURSELVES ON THE PRECIPICE OF CHANGE.
FOR SOME IN THIS CITY, THIS DARKNESS IS THE INVITATION TO RELEASE THE PAIN THAT SWELLS WITHIN.

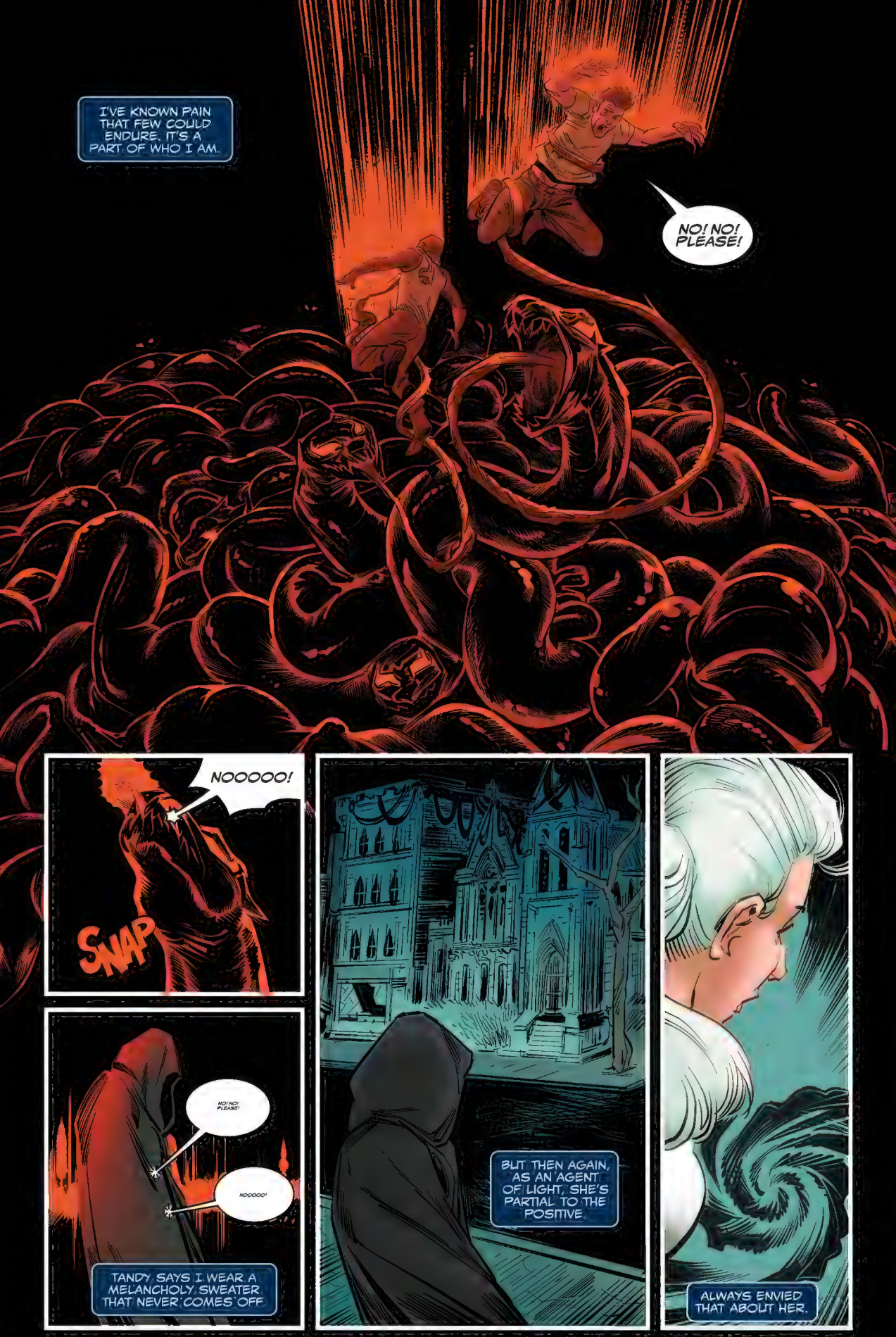
SINCE KNULL ARRIVED WITH HIS SYMBIOTE HORDE, CHAOS HAS REIGNED ON THE STREETS. MY PARTNER AND I HAVE SEEN IT FIRSTHAND.
YOU CAN CALL US
CLOAK AND DAGGER
I WAS WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA WHEN THEY ARRIVED--I'VE SEEN THE GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES WITH MY OWN EYES.
HIS ENERGY, HEIGHTENING THE DESPAIR EVER-PRESENT IN A SOCIETY OF LACK.
AS DISCONCERTING AS THE WORLD GOING TO $*@! MAY BE, SOMETHING CONCERNS ME MORE.
THE SYMBIOTE EFFECT HAS CHANGED CLOAK...HE WAS NEVER THE WARMEST, BUT SOMETHING WITHIN HIM HAS GROWN OUTRIGHT COLD.
THINK WE SHOULD JOIN THE PARTY? I MEAN IF YOU TAKE THE FAR END AND I--
OUR PSI-LINK, THE MENTAL CONNECTION THAT CONNECTS US, HAS BEEN COMPROMISED BY KNULL'S DARK PSYCHIC ENERGY. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S FEELING...
HEY!

...OR WHAT HE'S ABOUT TO DO.
YOU BEST GET AWAY FROM HERE, MAN.
BUT ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS...
...OR EVEN THOUGHTS.
WHEREAS ONCE, WE OPERATED AS TWO SIDES OF ONE COIN...
...CLOAK SEEMS TO HAVE MERGED THE DARKNESS WITHIN HIM WITH THAT OF KNULL'S.
AND NOW I THINK HE REVELS IN THE PAIN HE INFLICTS.
TYPICALLY, CLOAK TAPS INTO THE DARKFORCE DIMENSION TO TELEPORT.
IT'S A REALITY UNTO ITSELF WITH ITS OWN SHARE OF TERRORS--
--BUT BEING CONSTANTLY CONNECTED TO THE DARKFORCE AND THE MONSTERS WITHIN IT CONSUMES TYRONE. IT'S LITERALLY EATING HIM ALIVE.
FOR YEARS, I HAVE HELD THAT HUNGER AT BAY, AND CLOAK HAS CONSUMED MY LIGHTFORCE ENERGY.
BUT TONIGHT...

...CLOAK IS FEEDING THAT DARKNESS SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PAIN IN THE WORLD. BUT HOPE TEMPERED DESPAIR.
IN FAR TOO MANY CASES, THAT IS NO LONGER THE TRUTH.
UNDER THAT CLOAK IS TY JOHNSON, THE PERSON CLOSEST TO ME ON EARTH.
AT THIS MOMENT, I FEEL LIKE WE'RE A MILLION MILES APART.

I PRAY THAT WHEN THIS ENDS--RATHER, "IF" THIS ENDS--WE CAN BE AS WE WERE.
TY! WAIT!
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S HOPE OR NAIVETE SPEAKING, BUT RIGHT ABOUT NOW, IT'S ALL I'VE GOT.
WHY'D YOU DO THAT? I HAD THEM DOWN.
NOT DOWN FAR ENOUGH.
EYES UP, OFFICERS! I WANT YOU ALL LOOKING FOR ANY CIVILIANS WE CAN GET TO SAFETY. YOU SEE ANYONE, YOU CALL IT IN FOR BACK UP AND THEN YOU GO GET 'EM!
OFFICER DAYSHA DENTON. BY THE GETUP, I ASSUME YOU'RE CLOAK, WHICH WOULD MAKE YOU DAGGER?
YES, OFFICER DENTON, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WE'VE GOT A SITUATION THREE BLOCKS EAST, ON ELM AND 17TH. BANK ROBBERY. SWAT AND TACTICAL HAVE BEEN OVERRUN.
WE'RE ON...
...IT.
JUST MET YOU TWO, BUT FROM THE LOOK OF THINGS, YOU'RE OUT OF SYNC.
MY NAME IS TYRONE JOHNSON...

...AND TONIGHT, I CAN SMELL THE WORLD'S FEAR.
THE TERROR IN THE STREETS IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL ROT THAT CORRODES THIS WORLD.
BRAK BRAK BRAK
IT'S NO LONGER A MATTER OF MAKING THE CROOKED PLACES STRAIGHT.
BECAUSE AT THIS MOMENT, THE WHOLE DAMNED WORLD IS CROOKED.
EVEN BEFORE KNULL, WE REVELED IN SORROW.

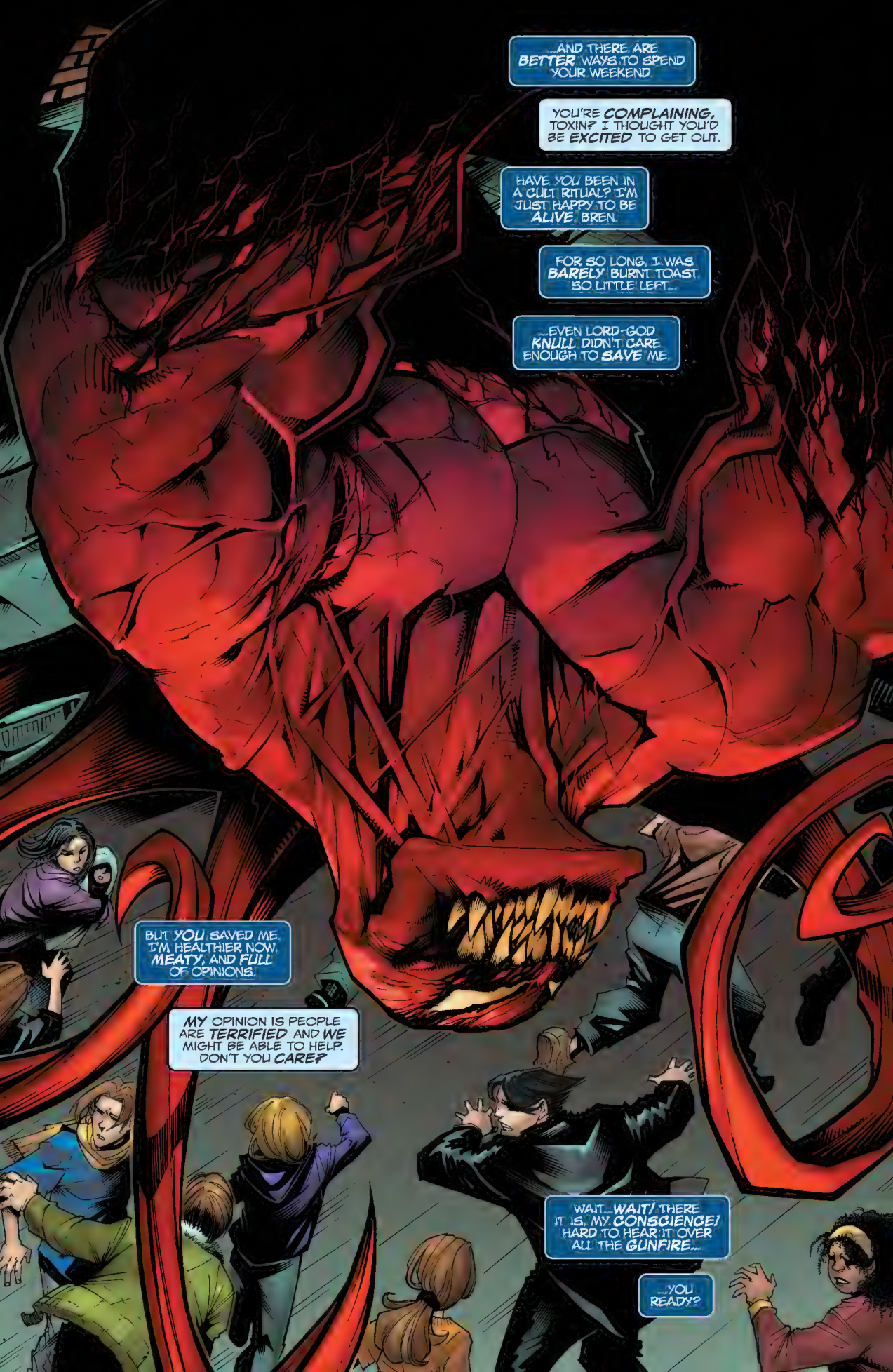

I'VE KNOWN PAIN THAT FEW COULD ENDURE. IT'S A PART OF WHO I AM.
NO! NO! PLEASE!
NOOOOO!
SNAP
NO! NO! PLEASE!
NOOOOO!
TANDY SAYS I WEAR A MEL'ANCHOLY SWEATER THAT NEVER COMES OFF.
BUT THEN AGAIN, AS AN AGENT OF LIGHT, SHE'S PARTIAL TO THE POSITIVE.
ALWAYS ENVIED THAT ABOUT HER.

CARRYING PAST TRAUMA CAN BE A CHOICE.
WAY EASIER THAN DOING THE WORK TO GET ONE'S #%@! TOGETHER.
WHAT HAPPENED? DID YOU GET THEM?
I THINK YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON IN THIS LIFE I HAVE EVER TRUSTED.
BUT I CAN NO LONGER BE THE PERSON YOU'VE KNOWN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
UUUHHH...
GUUUUHHH...
WHUMP
THUMP
WHEN I WAS ON THE STREETS, I WOULD HIDE IN CHURCHES...
WE BOTH DID, TY.
I WASN'T JUST LOOKING FOR SHELTER. I WAS TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD.

MAYBE THE WORLD ISN'T SUPPOSED TO MAKE SENSE.
THEN WHERE DO I FIND HOPE?
WITHIN.
NO MATTER HOW CRAZY THINGS GET, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE LIGHT...
...YOU JUST HAVE TO LET ME IN...
...AND WE JUST HAVE TO KEEP THE FAITH.
FAITH.

AFTER KNULL, THE WORLD WILL NEVER BE THE SAME.
RIGHT AND WRONG NO LONGER MEANS WHAT IT DID WHEN WE BEGAN THIS JOURNEY.
WE CAN ADJUST TO LIFE HOWEVER IT MANIFESTS.
WELL, I GUESS THEY WON'T BE ROBBING BANKS ANYTIME SOON.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT.
YES... BUT THERE'S A BRIGHT SIDE...
WHATEVER COMES, WE'LL BE FACING IT TOGETHER.
THE END.

THE LINCOLN TUNNEL.
THAT UNHOLY TRAIL BETWEEN NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.
NYOOOARR!
KEEP YOUR FIRE TIGHT!
10-13, DISPATCH! WE'VE GOT AN ALCHEMAX TRANSPORT OVERTURNED! NEED BACKUP! WE NEED BACK--
LISTEN TO ME, BREN. I KNOW THE BROOD...
--ARRGHK!


...AND THERE ARE BETTER WAYS TO SPEND YOUR WEEKEND.
YOU'RE COMPLAINING, TOXIN? I THOUGHT YOU'D BE EXCITED TO GET OUT.
HAVE YOU BEEN IN A CULT RITUAL? I'M JUST HAPPY TO BE ALIVE, BREN.
FOR SO LONG, I WAS BARELY BURNT TOAST. SO LITTLE LEFT...
...EVEN LORD-GOD KNULL DIDN'T CARE ENOUGH TO SAVE ME.
BUT YOU SAVED ME. I'M HEALTHIER NOW, MEATY, AND FULL OF OPINIONS.
MY OPINION IS PEOPLE ARE TERRIFIED AND WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP. DON'T YOU CARE?
WAIT...WAIT! THERE IT IS. MY CONSCIENCE! HARD TO HEAR IT OVER ALL THE GUNFIRE...
...YOU READY?

WHOMP
READY TO END THIS QUICK, MAN! PEOPLE ARE IN DANGER.
WHICH PEOPLE? THE HUMANS OR THE ALIEN--
--SCCK?!
ONE SECOND...
...LET ME DO THE TALKING.
HUMANS ARE FUN, SURE...
...ALL THOSE UNIQUE INTERNAL ORGANS, DIFFERENT SHAPES INSIDE, LIKE JUICY SNOWFLAKES...
...BUT IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, THEY'LL POP ON YOU. LET'S SEE WHAT SPECIAL TREATS YOU'VE GOT INSIDE.

GO AHEAD... THEY'VE DONE WORSE.
WHAT?
WHAT IS THAT? IT'S LIKE I CAN SMELL HIS WORDS IN MY MOUTH.
THAT'S PHEROMONE, DUDE. THAT'S HOW BUGS LIKE THE BROOD TALK TO EACH OTHER...
ALCHEMAX CUT ME UP. I'M HUMAN. I WAS HUMAN...
THERE'S BROOD MARROW IN MY BONES. THE PAIN--EVERY DAY A NEW SURGERY... CAN'T EVEN TALK ANYMORE, NOT LIKE I COULD...
IT'S BEEN MONTHS... NOW, WOULD YOU STOP MY ESCAPE?
HATE TO SAY IT, BREN...
...BUT I THINK WE'RE FIGHTING THE WRONG PEOPLE.
YOU CALL THIS A FIGHT?

CRACK
SOMEONE CALL FOR BACKUP?
GUARDSMAN. ALCHEMAX SECURITY.
BUILT TO BEAT SYMBIOTES.
SECURITY? ALL I SEE IS CANNED MEAT!
THAT PUNCH HURT-- YOU SURE WE CAN BACK THAT TALK UP?
YOUR GOD RAINED ALIEN CRAP FROM THE SKY. BLOCKED OUT OUR SUN. YOUR KIND HIT US HARD.

BUT NEW YORK ALWAYS HITS BACK, ALIEN.
AND ALCHEMAX IS HERE TO HELP.
TOUGH TALK FOR A LITTLE GREEN MAN.
LITTLE? DOES THIS SEEM LITTLE TO YOU, UNSUB?
WELL?
CHOOM
DOES IT?
CHOOM
YOUR SCIENCE PROJECT'S DOWN, GUARDSMAN. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER ALIEN?
HE'S GONE...
...GUARDSMAN?

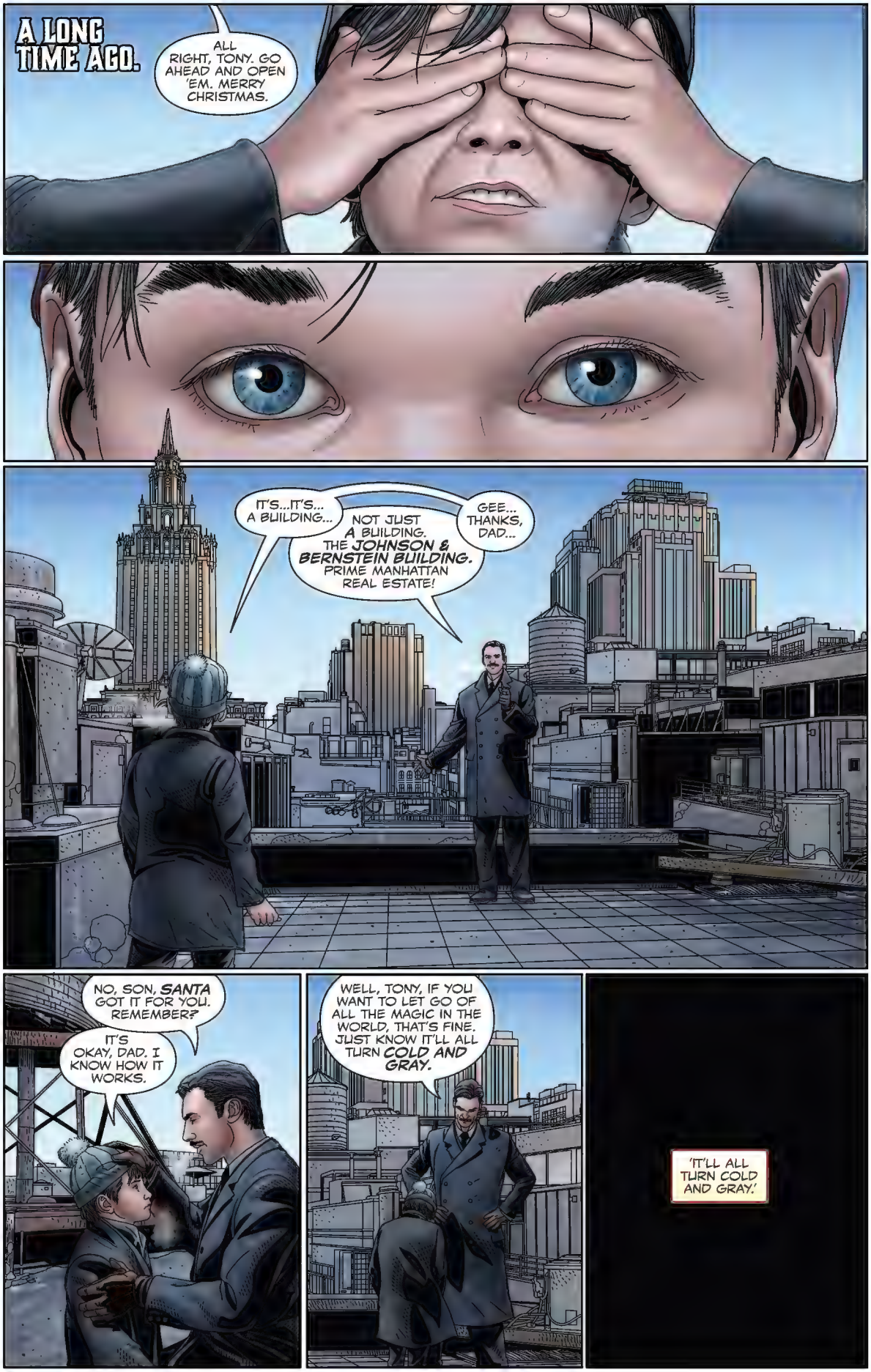
"...FOR NOW."
ALCHEMAX HAS ALWAYS BEEN HOT FOR SYMBIOTES.
...BUT STUFFING HUMANS FULL OF ALIEN GUTS IS A NEW, DISGUSTING LOW.
NOT TO MENTION HIRING ARMORED ENFORCERS. THAT GUARDSMAN ALMOST FRIED US.
I JUST FOUND YOU, TOXIN. LET'S TRY NOT TO DIE ON WEEK ONE, OKAY?
WE LEFT THAT BROOD BEHIND. HE'S BACK ON ALCHEMAX'S OPERATING TABLE BECAUSE OF US...
...WE'RE NOT LETTING THIS DROP.
TODT HILL, STATEN ISLAND.
WE HAD TO LEAVE, THAT GUY COULD'VE KILLED US!
PLEASE, THAT WAS PLAYGROUND STUFF.
WORRIED DAD WON'T LIKE YOU FIGHTING?

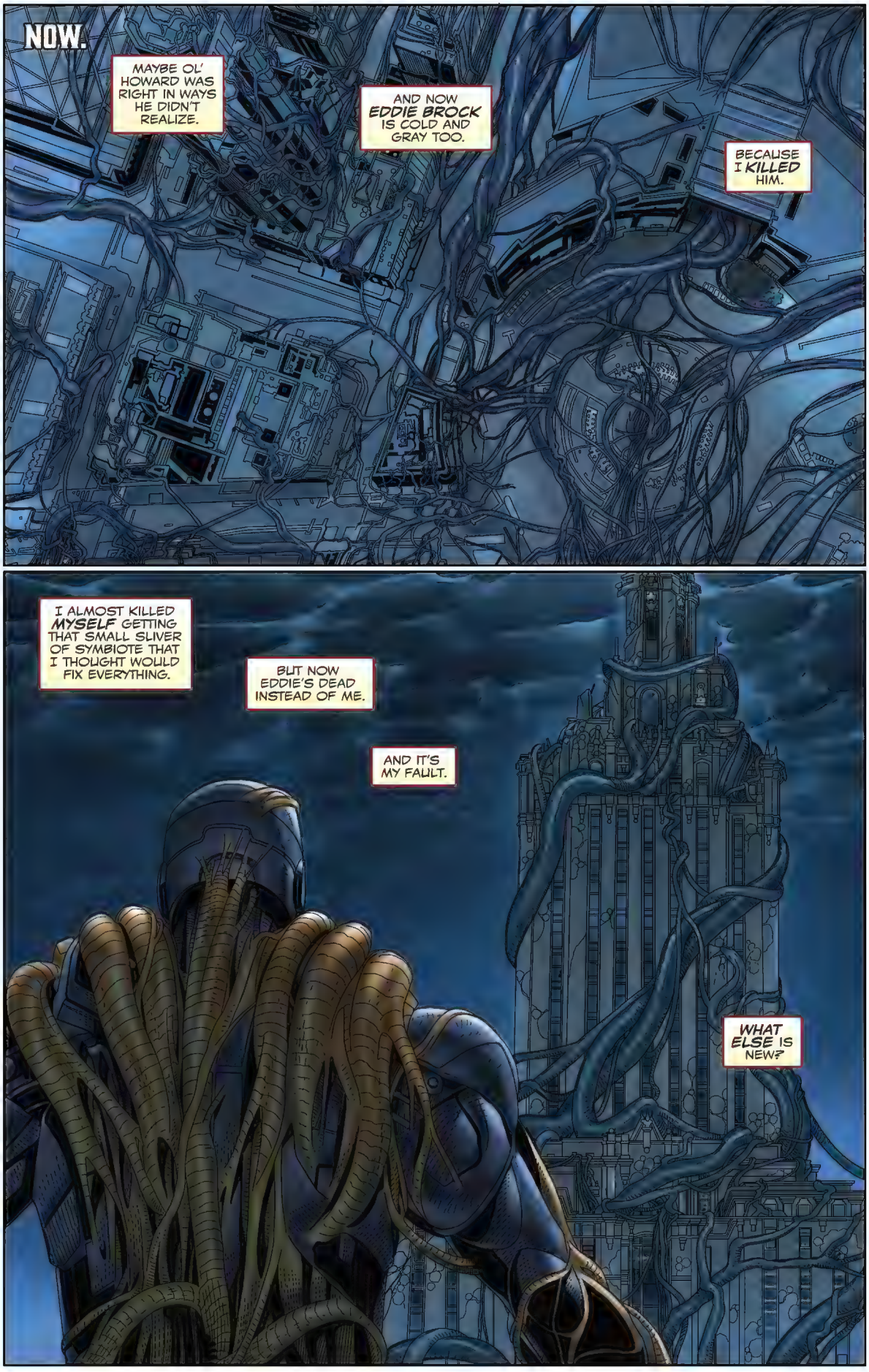
I DON'T EVEN HAVE MY LEARNER'S PERMIT, MAN! I'VE NEVER BEEN IN A FIGHT. BUT TRUST ME, IF I WAS?
DAD WOULDN'T BE MAD. HELL, HE'D NEVER BE PROUDER, PROBABLY BUY ME A STEAK DINNER.
WOW. YOU WANT ME TO MAKE US A VIOLIN?
WAS IT THE PUNCHES IN THE FACE THAT YOU'RE STUCK ON? BECAUSE LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT MY FAMILY.
THAT'S ALL YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT SINCE WE MET.

SLAM
QUIET, TOXIN. YOU... THINK ANYONE COULD TELL?
ABOUT WHAT? YOUR BAD NEW BEST FRIEND?
TRY MALIGNANT PASSENGER.
THAT HURTS, BREN. NOT DYING IN A FIRE HURTS. BUT I'LL BE WRITING A LONG ENTRY IN MY ALIEN DIARY.
DON'T BE AN ASS. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MAKE US LOOK LIKE AN ADULT.
I'VE ONLY EVER WORN ADULTS. I GAVE YOU THE MULLIGAN WITH A HINT OF THE BROCK.
I AM THE POCKET
LIKE I EVEN KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS! NOW SHUT UP, AND GET INTO THE POCKET.
THEN YOU BETTER HOPE I DON'T TAKE A LIGHTER TO THESE JEANS.
BREN!
I'M HOME FROM WORK!
HEY, DAD...YOU'RE BACK EARLY.
I EARNED IT, WATERS. FEELS LIKE I FIT SIXTEEN HOURS INTO SIX ON THIS ONE...

...YOUR FATHER'S HAD A HELL OF A DAY.
IT'S ALL DANGEROUS

KING IN BLACK: IRON MAN/DOCTOR DOOM


A LONG TIME AGO.
ALL RIGHT, TONY. GO AHEAD AND OPEN 'EM. MERRY CHRISTMAS.
IT'S...IT'S... A BUILDING...
NOT JUST A BUILDING. THE JOHNSON & BERNSTEIN BUILDING. PRIME MANHATTAN REAL ESTATE!
GEE... THANKS, DAD...
NO, SON, SANTA GOT IT FOR YOU. REMEMBER?
IT'S OKAY, DAD. I KNOW HOW IT WORKS.
WELL, TONY, IF YOU WANT TO LET GO OF ALL THE MAGIC IN THE WORLD, THAT'S FINE. JUST KNOW IT'LL ALL TURN COLD AND GRAY.
'IT'LL ALL TURN COLD AND GRAY.'


NOW.
MAYBE OL' HOWARD WAS RIGHT IN WAYS HE DIDN'T REALIZE.
AND NOW EDDIE BROCK IS COLD AND GRAY TOO.
BECAUSE I KILLED HIM.
I ALMOST KILLED MYSELF GETTING THAT SMALL SLIVER OF SYMBIOTE THAT I THOUGHT WOULD FIX EVERYTHING.
BUT NOW EDDIE'S DEAD INSTEAD OF ME.
AND IT'S MY FAULT.
WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

THE JOHNSON & BERNSTEIN BUILDING'S STILL HERE THOUGH.
I SOLD IT AT 13. MADE A SIX MILLION DOLLAR PROFIT.
'PROUD OF YOU, SON,' OL' HOWARD HAD SAID.
NOW, IF I'D GOTTEN A LOOK AT IRON MAN AS A KID...THAT WOULD'VE BEEN MAGIC.
BUT IT SEEMS MY HEROIC EFFORTS THESE DAYS END UP BEING QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
JUST ASK EDDIE BROCK.
WOULD YOU MOURN ME AS YOU MOURN HIM?
A MAN WHOM IN THE EYES OF MANY IS A VILLAIN?

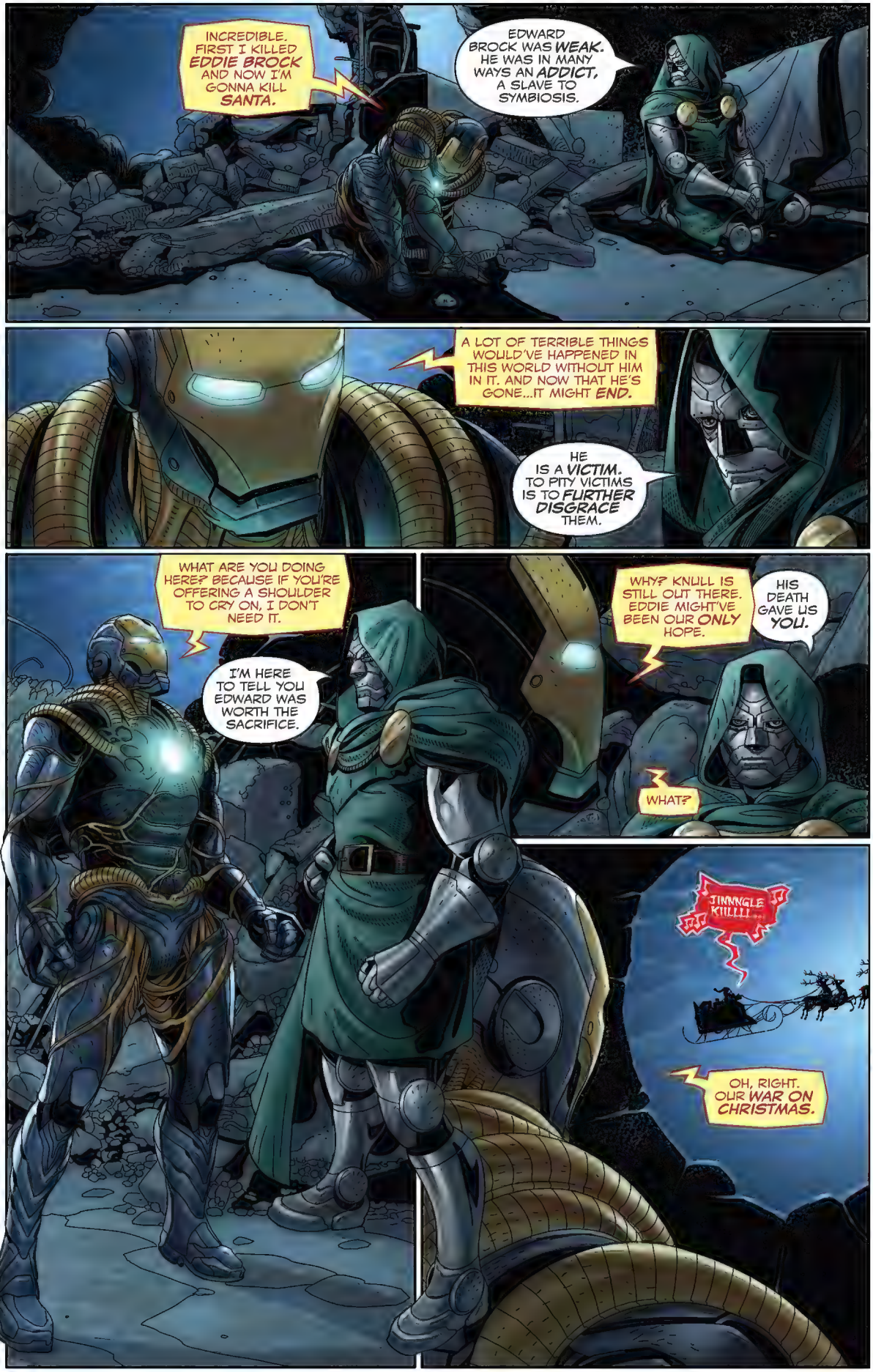
DEPENDS. DID I KILL YOU?
THAT IS OUT OF THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY, BUT FOR THE SAKE OF MY CURIOSITY, LET'S SAY YES.
WAS I TRYING TO SAVE YOU?
ISN'T THAT WHAT SO MANY OF YOU CONSTANTLY WASTE YOUR TIME DOING? TRYING TO SAVE ME?
YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE IT'S TIME WE ALL GAVE UP ON THAT.
YOU'VE NEVER MUCH BEEN ONE TO GIVE UP, HOWEVER. CALL IT HARDHEADEDNESS. OR STUPIDITY--
WHAT IS THAT?
...NO...THAT'S... IMPOSSIBLE...

IS THAT--
NO...OF COURSE NOT.
IT'S...IT'S DECEMBER... RIGHT? I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER...
DO YOU SEE IT?
STARK, THIS IS ABSURD. IT'S NOT EVEN CHRISTMAS EVE--
VICTOR, I'M LOOKING RIGHT AT IT.
THAT'S... IT IS...IT ABSOLUTELY IS...
THE SPIRITS OF YULE ARE PETTY GERMANIC FOLKLORE--
NO... NO. IT'S HIM.
"IT'S SANTA.
"I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. SANTA IS REAL."
WAIT...

SLAY BELLS STING... IN PERDITION...
OR HE WAS REAL...

OH MY GOD. THEY KNULLIFIED SANTA.
IT CANNOT BE YOUR HALLOWED GIFT GIVER. 'TIS MERELY SOME SOULLESS PERVERSION OF THE CHIMNEY'D ONE.
WE HAVE TO STOP HIM BEFORE HE HURTS SOMEONE--
STARK--
VICTOR, KNULL'S GOT HIS OWN VERSION OF FATHER CHRISTMAS. THE LAST THING I WANT IS HIM DELIVERING SYMBIOTE PRESENTS TO INNOCENT KIDS!
CAP, KAMALA, GRIMM, SUMMERS... GUESS THAT WASN'T ENOUGH FOR THAT BLACK HOLE BUCKET OF TRASH KNULL.
HE'S GOTTA RUIN THE HOLIDAYS TOO.
IT SEEMS NO CORNER OF LIFE IS SAFE.

I MUST SAY I FIND THIS QUITE DICKENSIAN--
WATCH THE REINDEER!
VLLASSSFFS
WHICH ONES WERE THOSE? DASHER AND DANCER...?
IN LATVERIA, THE HOLIDAY LEGENDS TELL OF A SINGING GHOST MADE OF OX HAIR... HE BRINGS PIG IRON TO ORPHANS AND STRIKES DOWN FOOLS WITH A DREAM SCYTHE FORGED IN THE HELLISH SCREAMS OF THE DEAD--
ZZFEOOOWF
VIOLENT NIGHT, NO MOONLIGHT...
ALL IS KNULL, ALL IS BLIGHT
KAPLAOOOWWWWSFFGHTH
ARGH, HIS VOICE IS LIKE... A DEAFENING SHORTWAVE RADIO...BEING SHREDDED BY A COMBINE...


INCREDIBLE. FIRST I KILLED EDDIE BROCK AND NOW I'M GONNA KILL SANTA.
EDWARD BROCK WAS WEAK. HE WAS IN MANY WAYS AN ADDICT, A SLAVE TO SYMBIOSIS.
A LOT OF TERRIBLE THINGS WOULD'VE HAPPENED IN THIS WORLD WITHOUT HIM IN IT. AND NOW THAT HE'S GONE...IT MIGHT END.
HE IS A VICTIM. TO PITY VICTIMS IS TO FURTHER DISGRACE THEM.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? BECAUSE IF YOU'RE OFFERING A SHOULDER TO CRY ON, I DON'T NEED IT.
I'M HERE TO TELL YOU EDWARD WAS WORTH THE SACRIFICE.
WHY? KNULL IS STILL OUT THERE. EDDIE MIGHT'VE BEEN OUR ONLY HOPE.
HIS DEATH GAVE US YOU.
WHAT?
JINNNGLE KILLL!
OH, RIGHT. OUR WAR ON CHRISTMAS.

C'MERE, NICKY...
THAT'S IT...
I'M GAINING CONTROL OF THE SLEIGH...
EXPERIENCE MY PAINDEER!
GREAT! I LOVE SYMBIOTE LIVESTOCK!
HAVE AT THEE, FREAKISH FLYING VENISON!
VVVPPEEAOCSCHFFFF

YOU SEE? YOUR ARMOR! A SPLENDID SYNTHESIS OF YOUR TECHNO-ORGANIC EXTREMIS SYSTEM-- IMPERFECT AND HONESTLY UNDERWHELMING ON ITS OWN--COMBINED WITH THE LIMITLESS VOID POWER OF KNULL'S SYMBIOTE REALM--
VICTOR, I'M GOOD ON COLOR COMMENTARY...
QUICK, GRAB HIM BEFORE THIS TURNS INTO SANTACIDE...
BEEYYEEASTKCH
UH. OKAY. WELL.
IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. YOU SAW THAT, RIGHT?

THE MATERIAL OF THE SUIT...IT'S RETURNING TO ME...
OF COURSE IT IS. THAT IS ITS BRILLIANCE.
!!!
THAT WAS EXTRAORDINARILY PROFANE.

TELL ME THE TRUTH. ARE YOU HIM? ARE YOU ACTUALLY SANTA?
EVEN IF YOU TRULY ARE KRINGLE, YOUR CORRUPTION IS UNMITIGATED AND YOU MUST BE DESTROYED.
DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN ME?
LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY. I'D LIKE TO KNOW THAT THE WORLD ISN'T JUST COLD AND GRAY. I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT'S JUST DEATH AND SADNESS AND FAILURE.
BECAUSE IF IT ISN'T...THEN MAYBE THERE'S A SMALL CHANCE OF A WAY BACK FROM ALL THIS.
THERE IS NO RETURN. THIS CHRISTMAS AND ALL TIME FORWARD...
...WILL BE BLACK!
HO HO HO!!!

HERE'RE SOME TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY--

WEEEOOOOOAAAAAAKKOOOOTTAAAAAFF

KRAMPUS, END THY REIGN!

WHAT HAPPENED...?
YOU HAVE ERADICATED NICHOLAS, THE JOLLIEST OF MEN...
I...I KILLED SANTA... THIS DAY JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER...
WAIT. PERHAPS IT ISN'T SO. LOOK.

HEY... YOU'RE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT... CAN YOU HEAR ME?
HIS WRETCHED INFECTION SEEMS TO HAVE ABATED.
TONY... ALWAYS SUCH A GOOD BOY...
AND VICTOR... ONE OF THE NAUGHTIEST TO HAVE EVER LIVED...
YOU ARE THE RIGHTFUL RULER OF THE NORTH POLE?
WELL. WE HAVE SLAUGHTERED YOUR ANTLERED AVIAN HERD. YOU MUST PROCURE A NEW METHOD OF TRANSPORT.
I'LL...I'LL FIND MY WAY HOME...
ACCORDING TO HIS LICENSE, HIS NAME IS MIKE DUNWOODY. B.O.S.S., SCAN THIS I.D. THROUGH DATABASES, PLEASE.
(NAME: MICHAEL. DUNWOODY.) (RESIDENT--PARAMUS. NEW JERSEY.) (OWNER--SNOW GLOBE HOLIDAY DECORATION SUPPLY.) (CALL 1-800--)
OKAY, GOT IT, THANKS.

YOU WERE ABLE TO REVERSE THE EFFECTS OF THE VOID'S ASSIMILATION.
SURE, ON MIKE DUNWOODY FROM PARAMUS. BUT EVEN LIKE THIS, I'M NO MATCH FOR KNULL.
I AGREE. BUT THE UNIQUE AMALGAMATION YOU WEAR COULD BE... EXTRAPOLATED... TO SOMETHING THAT COULD BE.
YOU MEAN YOU? AHA, SO THAT'S WHY YOU'RE HERE. YOU WANT THE ARMOR. NO CHANCE.
DO NOT DISMISS MY VIABILITY OUT OF HAND--
BUT NOW YOU'VE GOT ME THINKING...
WELL...AT LEAST THAT IS OF BENEFIT. YOUR INTELLECT IS... HIGHER THAN AVERAGE.

SOMETHING PERPLEXES ME. MICHAEL DUNWOODY REFERRED TO BOTH OF US BY OUR REAL NAMES.
NEITHER OF US HAS A SECRET IDENTITY.
BUT IN TANDEM, HE SO ARROGANTLY QUANTIFIED THE SUM MORAL VALUE OF OUR RESPECTIVE DEEDS.
ALSO NOT HARD.
BUT--
IF YOU WANT TO BELIEVE HE'S SANTA, THAT'S OKAY.
PREPOSTEROUS. I'M MERELY CONDUCTING AN INTELLECTUAL INVESTIGATION OF WHAT JUST OCCURRED.
YEAH, OKAY. BECAUSE SANTA IS OUT OF THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY IN A WORLD CURRENTLY OVERRUN BY SENTIENT BLACK GOO.
IT IS SIMPLY AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL PRESENCE--

DON'T LET GO OF ALL THE MAGIC IN THE WORLD, VICTOR.
COULD CLAUS BE A SORCERER SUPREME...?

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #2 VARIANT BY
KYLE HOTZ & DAN BROWN

KING IN BLACK: IRON MAN/DOCTOR DOOM VARIANT BY
DAN MORA & TAMRA BONVILLAIN

KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK VARIANT BY
JOE DENNETT, RUY JOSÉ & PAUL MOUNTS

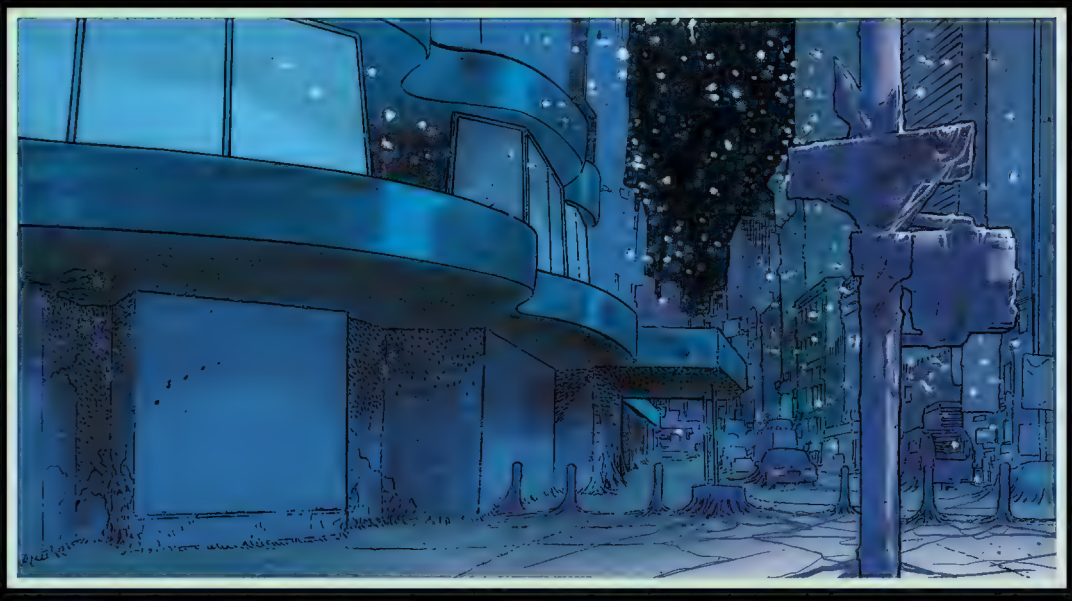
KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK
SANTA CLAUS VARIANT BY
AARON KUDER & MATTHEW WILSON

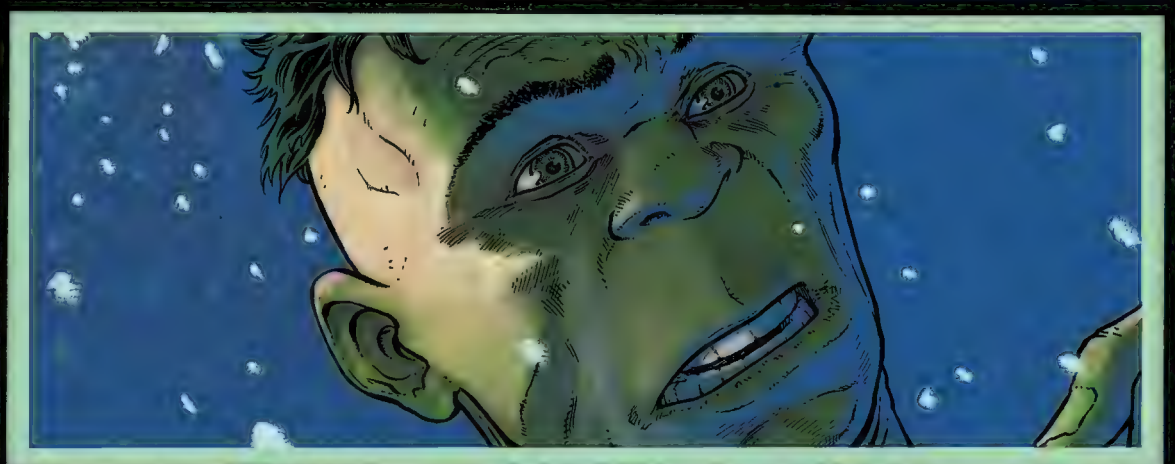
THE *HULK* IS IN BAD SHAPE. THE PROTECTIVE DEVIL HULK PERSONA IS DEAD, AND BRUCE BANNER IS GONE — DRAGGED OUT OF HIS OWN MINDSCAPE BY THE LEADER. NOW ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE CHILDLIKE SAVAGE HULK — DRAINED OF SO MUCH GAMMA THAT HE CAN BARELY WALK — AND JOE FIXIT, THE FORMER GREY HULK WHO NOW MANIFESTS IN BANNER'S BODY...

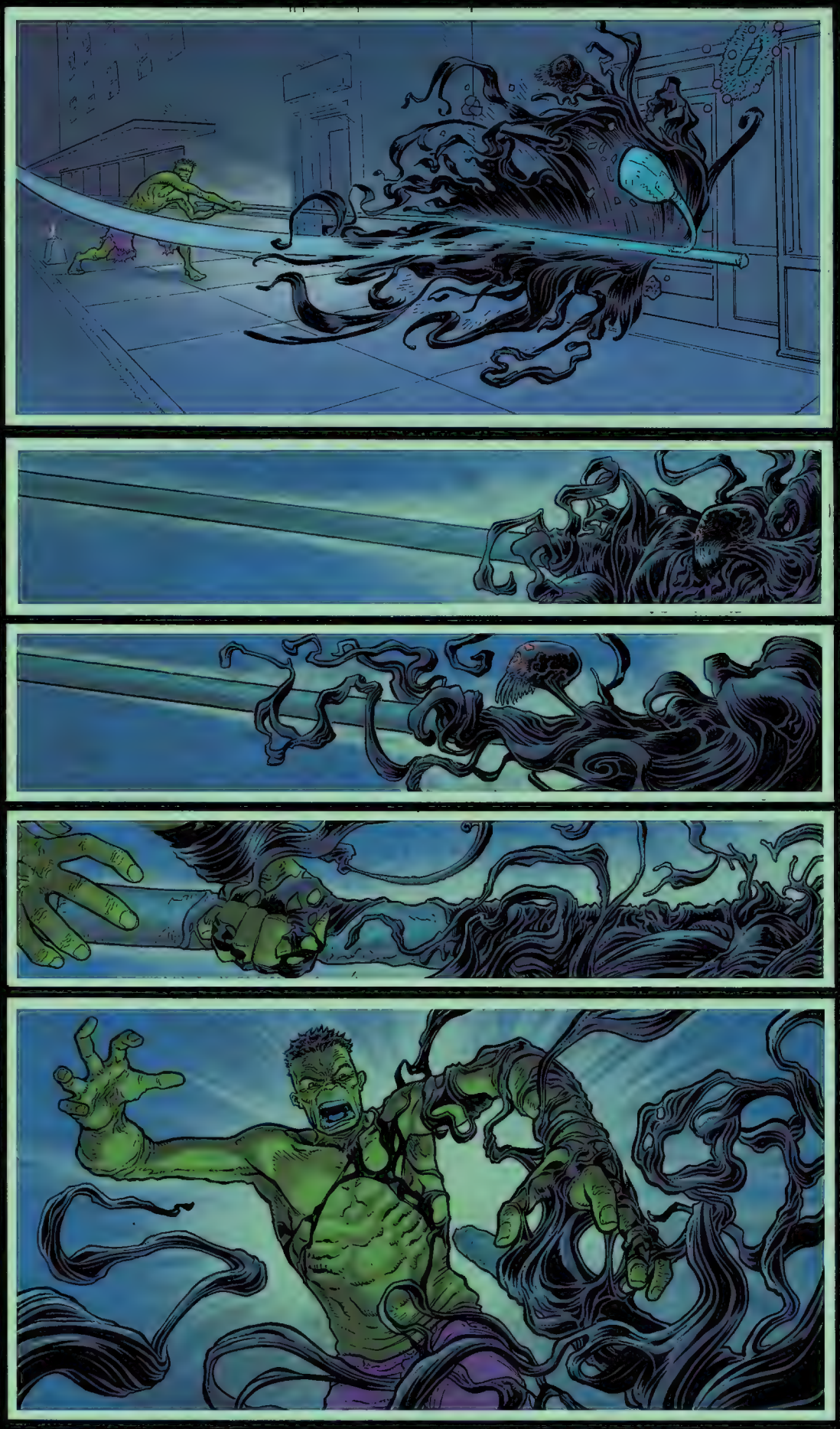
KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK

BLACK CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas...



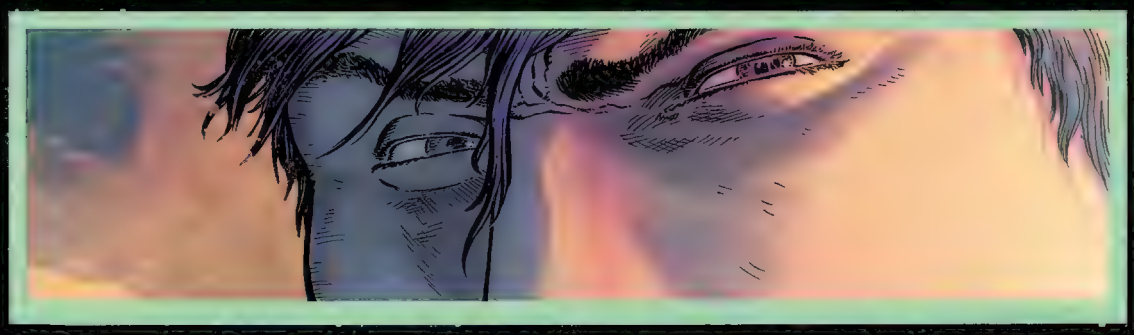


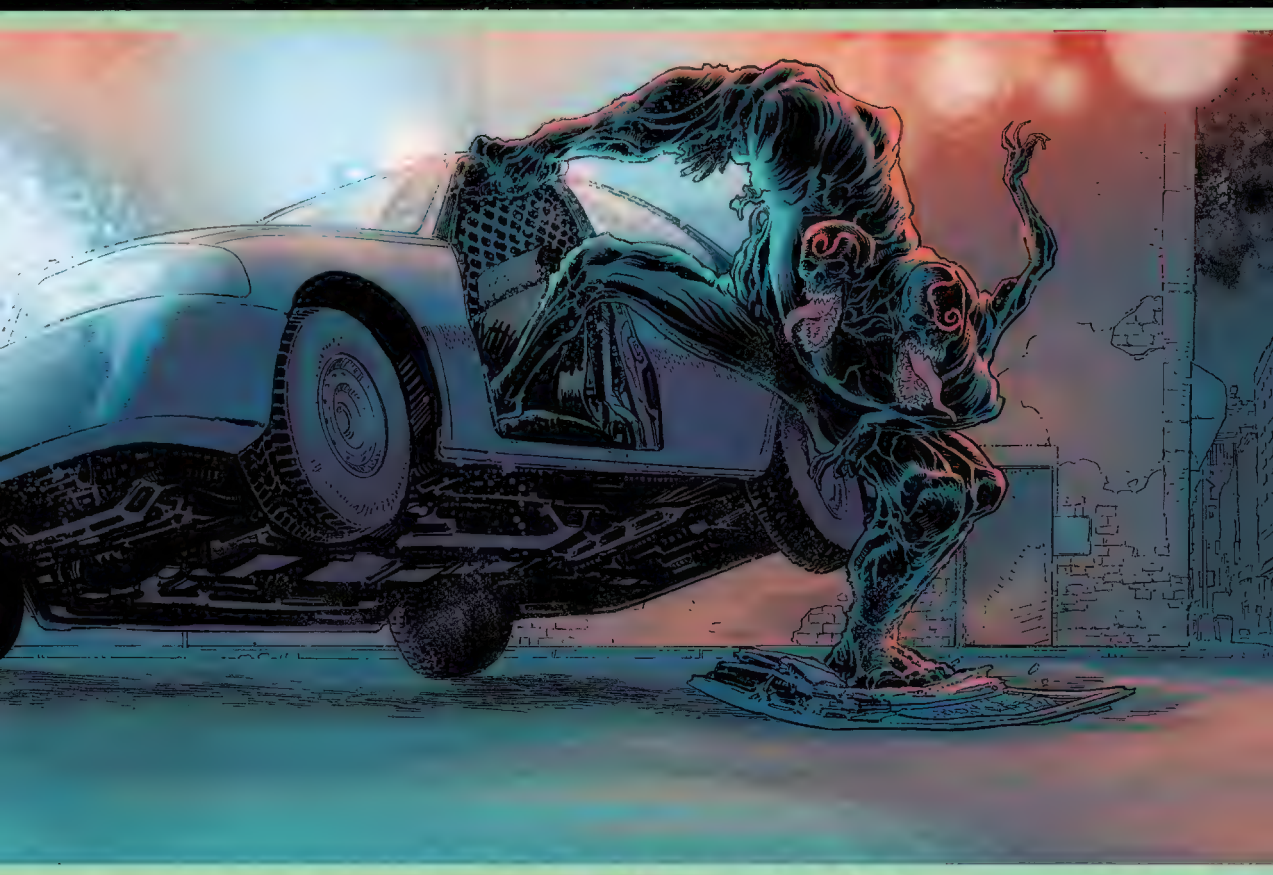


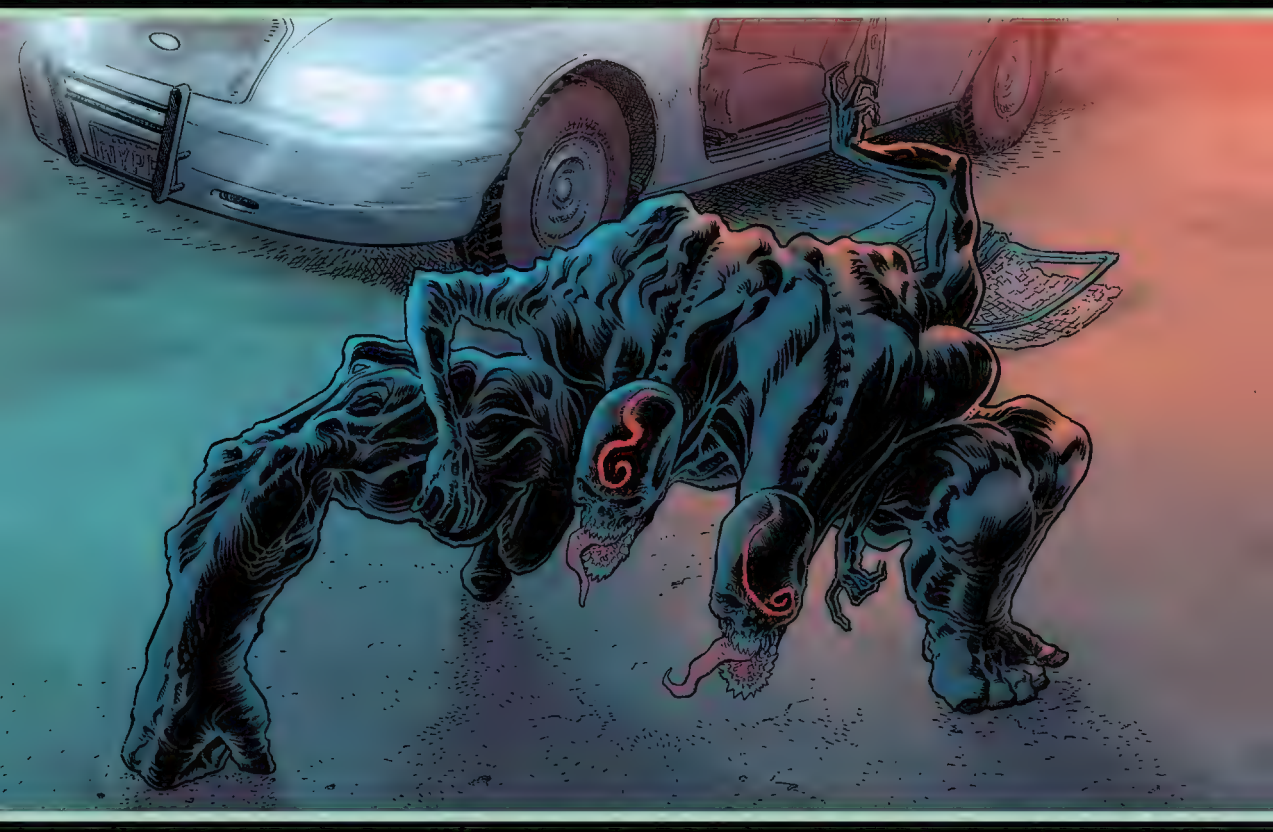
NYPD

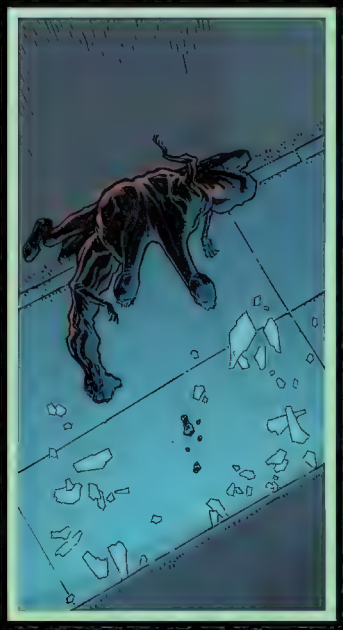
MANTLOS

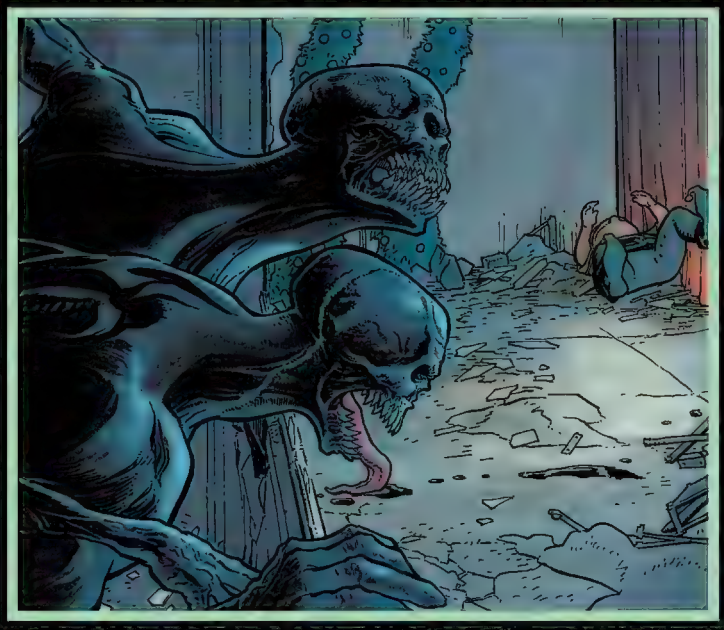
MERRY
CHRISTMAS

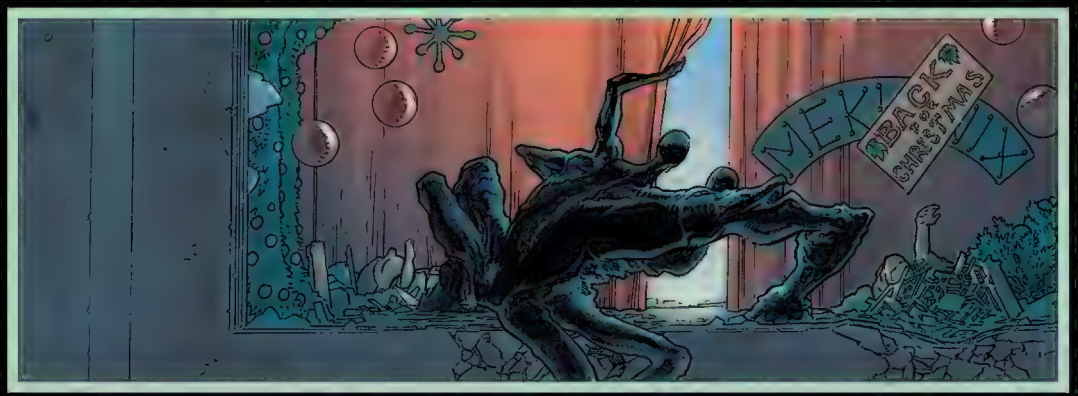








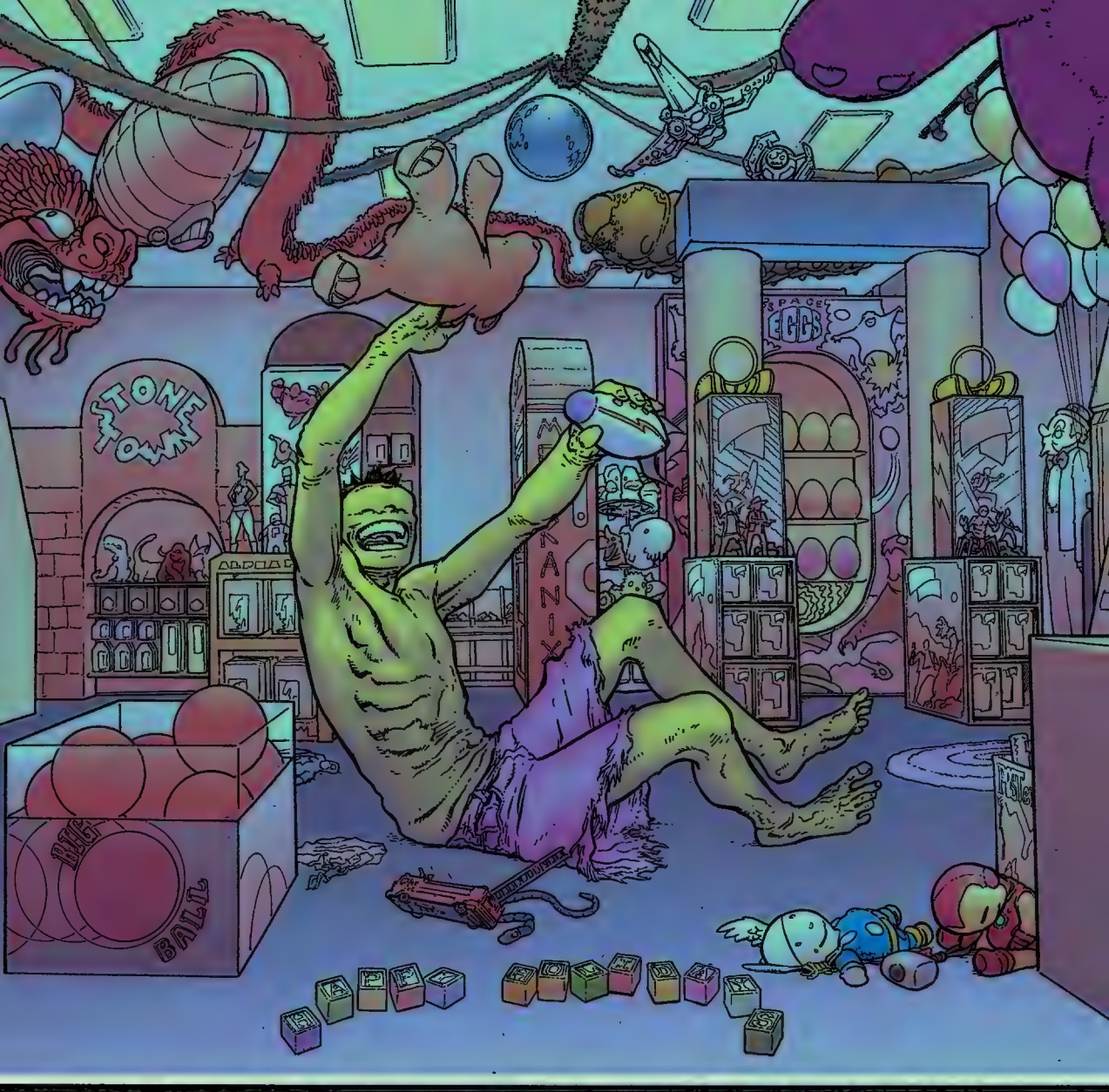



MEK
BACK
CHRISTMAS

ELECTRONICS

PLAY
GREG LAKE
BELIEVE IN FATHER...
2:07/ 3:32
VOL: 100
2012 WORLD TOUR

DIRECTORY



...and to all a

GOOD NIGHT.

"IF THESE SHADOWS REMAIN UNALTERED BY THE FUTURE, THE CHILD WILL DIE."

– CHARLES DICKENS,
A CHRISTMAS CAROL

KING IN BLACK: SPIDER-MAN VARIANT BY
FEDERICO VICENTINI & MARCIO MENYZ

KING IN BLACK: SPIDER-MAN
DEADPOOL 30TH ANNIVERSARY VARIANT BY
ROD LIEFELD & FEDERICO DLEE

KING IN BLACK: SCREAM VARIANT BY
RYAN BROWN

KING IN BLACK: SCREAM STORMBREAKERS VARIANT BY
R.D. SILVA & DAVID CURIEL

KING IN BLACK: SPIDER-MAN

WHEN I WAS A KID, I WANTED TO WIN A NOBEL PRIZE.
I LIKED SCIENCE. AND THE BEST SCIENTISTS? THEY WON NOBEL PRIZES.
IT WASN'T TILL LATER THAT I LEARNED THAT ALFRED NOBEL SET UP THE NOBEL PRIZE TO ATONE FOR HIS INVENTIONS. MOST NOTABLY, DYNAMITE, WHICH FOLKS MADE BOMBS OUT OF.
THE STORY GOES, HE OPENED UP THE NEWSPAPER ONE DAY AND SAW HIS OWN OBITUARY THERE, PRINTED BY MISTAKE. IT READ, "THE MERCHANT OF DEATH IS DEAD."
NOBEL WAS A GREAT SCIENTIST. HE UNDERSTOOD GUILT.
I'M SPIDER-MAN.
AND THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.

EVER SINCE I BROUGHT THAT THING BACK WITH ME, EVER SINCE IT ALL WENT WRONG...
...EVERY DEATH IT CAUSED HAS BEEN ON ME.
BREATHE.
BREATHE.
EVERYONE VENOM HAS HURT.
AND THEN EVERYONE CARNAGE HAS HURT.
AND THEN ALL THE OTHERS.
AND NOW...
JUST GOTTA BREATHE.
...THE WORLD IS ENDING.
AND IT ALL GOES BACK TO ME BRINGING THE SYMBIOTE TO EARTH, ALL THOSE YEARS AGO.
PATIENT ZERO OF A GLOBAL INFECTION.
AND NOW, DYLAN BROCK...
GOD.
WHAT A TIME FOR A PANIC ATTACK.

WHOOOSH
WHA--
OH NO.
HEART'S STILL RACING.
COLD SWEAT. SHALLOW BREATHING. THE SHAKES.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER.
I'M SPIDER-MAN.
AND I'M ON THE CLOCK.

OKAY.
NOTHING TO IT.
JUST LIKE CLOBBERING THE VULTURE.
AND I'VE BEEN DOING THAT SINCE I WAS A KID AND HE WAS A SLIGHTLY LESS ELDERLY MAN.
KA--
--POW!
WAAAUUGH!
WAAAUUGH!
POW

WHA--
SPIDER-MAN?!
SPIDER-MAN!
WAIT. IS THAT...?
REPTIL?!
UH-OH.
UH-OH.
THWIPP!
WHAT THE HECK, SPIDEY?!
I'M SORRY! I THOUGHT YOU WERE A SYMBIOTE DRAGON!
I WAS A PTERODACTYL! I WAS HELPING GET SOMEONE TO SAFETY!
I KNOW THAT NOW!
SPIDER-MAN! THREAT! MENACE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE? I THOUGHT YOU WENT TO AVENGERS ACADEMY? IN CALIFORNIA?
SPIDEY...AVENGERS ACADEMY CLOSED, LIKE, YEARS AGO.
...
I KNEW THAT.

ANYWAYS, IT'S YOUR FAULT THAT I'M HERE.
WHAT?
YOU'RE MY INSPIRATION! YOU KNOW, FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER-MAN, ALWAYS THERE FOR THE LITTLE GUY!
LOOK...
...ONE THING I LEARNED FROM DR. PYM?
KNOW YOUR CAPABILITIES. THOSE... THINGS--I CAN'T HANDLE THEM. I WOULDN'T DO ANY GOOD.
YEAH, OKAY...I UNDERSTAND THAT.
I MEAN, I'M JUST A KID WHO CAN TURN INTO DINOSAURS.
HEY, ANY TIME YOU WANT TO TRADE, LET ME KNOW.
PEOPLE LIKE DINOSAURS...
NO! SIGNAL!
BUT WHAT I LEARNED FROM YOU...
...IS THAT SAVING PEOPLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN FIGHTING PEOPLE. MAYBE I CAN'T FIGHT THOSE MONSTERS...

...BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THERE AREN'T PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO NEED HELP.
THAT'S MRS. VOLKOV. SHE NEEDS TO GET HOME. I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE SHE GETS THERE OKAY.
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU WOULD DO.
YEESH.
IF ALL PYM'S KIDS TURNED OUT LIKE THIS ONE...
...THE AVENGERS BETTER WATCH OUT FOR THEIR JOBS.
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO FOR EDDIE. FOR DYLAN. BUT THIS KID...
YOU...
YOU WANT SOME HELP?

WOO!
REPTIL AND SPIDEY, SAVING THE DAY!
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T HAVE ANYWHERE MORE IMPORTANT TO BE?
LIKE YOU SAID, KID.
"KNOW YOUR CAPABILITIES." THIS IS SOMETHING I CAN HELP OUT WITH.
SO, MRS. VOLKOV, WHERE ARE WE TAKING YOU?
...
SHE'S, UH, A BIG DAILY BUGLE FAN FROM WAY BACK, I THINK.
ANYWAYS, THAT'S ANOTHER REASON I COULD USE YOUR HELP.
WHERE'S STATEN ISLAND?
STATEN--?!
YOU DIDN'T TELL ME WE WERE GOING ALL THE WAY TO STATEN ISLAND!
DO YOU KNOW HOW FAR AWAY THAT IS?!
THWIPP!
I'M FROM NEVADA, MAN! I DON'T KNOW NEW YORK!

IT'S...
IT'S GOING TO BE A HIKE. LIKE, FIVE MILES OVER OPEN WATER.
HEY, NO PROBLEM. I CAN CARRY YOU BOTH.
YEAH.
NO PROBLEM.
VEER RIGHT, THEN.
WE NEED TO GET CLEAR OF THESE DRAGONS FIRST.
THE KID HAS THE RIGHT IDEA.
I GOT OVERWHELMED BACK THERE. KNULL, VENOM, ALL OF THIS... IT'S TOO MUCH. CAN'T SEE THE EVIL SPACE-FOREST FOR THE COSMIC MONSTER GOO-TREES.
FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO.
FOCUS ON ONE PERSON. ONE PERSON YOU CAN HELP.

MAYBE I'M NOT DOCTOR STRANGE. MAYBE I'M NOT THOR OR IRON MAN OR CAPTAIN MARVEL OR ANY OF THOSE GUYS WHO CAN HANDLE WHAT'S GOING ON.
MAYBE I'M JUST SOME JERK FROM QUEENS WITH RADIOACTIVE SPIDER-BLOOD.
MAYBE IT IS ALL MY FAULT.
THWIPP!
BUT I CAN HELP ONE PERSON AT LEAST.
AND THAT'S WHERE YOU START.

SO...JUST KEEP FLYING IN THIS DIRECTION?
YEEESSS...?
MOST OF THE LIGHTS ARE OUT ON STATEN. I HADN'T EXPECTED THAT.
I THOUGHT WE'D BE ABLE TO JUST FOLLOW THEM.
WAIT...
...THERE.
THE FERRY.
HEAD FOR THE FERRY.
WOW.
NO MOON, NO STARS, NO LIGHT... IT'S LIKE WE'RE FLYING THROUGH SPACE. THERE'S NO POINT OF REFERENCE EXCEPT THE FERRY'S LIGHTS.
IT'S A LIGHTHOUSE. A BEACON.
OH NO...
BUT THE THING ABOUT BEACONS...

...THEY ATTRACT ALL SORTS.

S-SPIDEY?
IT'S ENORMOUS. THERE ARE JUST THE TWO OF US, AND THAT THING IS ENORMOUS.
WE CAN'T POSSIBLY FIGHT IT.
...
WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT IT.
THERE ARE PEOPLE ON THAT FERRY. LOTS OF THEM.
WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE HERE, KID. I'M SORRY.
SPIDEY, I-- THIS IS THE BIGGEST FLYING DINOSAUR I CAN TURN INTO!
I CAN'T TURN INTO A DRAGON OR ANYTHING!
HMM.
AND A T. REX WOULDN'T BE GREAT, NOT IN THE HARBOR.
BUT I THINK I HAVE AN IDEA...
"...SO LISTEN UP."

HEY, LISTEN, I DON'T HAVE A TICKET...
SPIDER-MAN!
WE'RE HERE TO HELP--
YOU AND HER?
NO, THIS IS MRS. VOLKOV. I'M TALKING ABOUT THE KID OUT THERE WHO CAN TURN INTO DINOSAURS.
DINOSAURS? HAVE YOU SEEN THE SIZE OF THAT THING?
YEAH, THE THING ABOUT THAT?
"YOU GOT YOUR DINOSAURS ON THE LAND, YOU GOT YOUR DINOSAURS IN THE SKY...
"BUT SOME OF THE BIGGEST, MEANEST, DINOS..."

...LIVED IN THE WATER.

SPLASSHH
YOU--
YOU SAVED US! WE'RE GOING TO BE OKAY!
NOT SO FAST, PAL.
THE KID BOUGHT US TIME IS ALL.
WHAT?!
ONLY WAY TO MESS THOSE THINGS UP IS WITH LIGHT AND ELECTRICITY.
YOU GUYS HAVE ANY, LIKE, LASERS ON BOARD? ANYTHING LIKE THAT?
N-NO?
THEN WE BETTER HOPE THAT YOU HAVE SOME SERIOUS GENERATORS ON THIS TUB.
TUB?

THIS IS AN OLLIS-CLASS FERRY, PAL. BRAND NEW.
WE RUN ON FOUR EMD 12-710 DIESEL ENGINES.
OUR EMERGENCY GENERATOR ALONE PUTS OUT 400,000 KILOWATTS.
YOU WANT JUICE?
WE GOT JUICE.
WELL, ALL RIGHT.
LET'S PUT IT TO WORK, THEN!
WE NEED TO LAUNCH THE LIFEBOATS!
THERE'S A MONSTER OUT THERE!
TWO MONSTERS!
WHOA!
SPIDER-MAN?!
ARE YOU GOING TO STOP THE MONSTERS?
WHAT GOOD CAN YOU DO? WHERE'S CAPTAIN MARVEL? WHERE'S THOR?

OKAY, WAIT, LISTEN--
NO, PLEASE, I'M--
IT'S YOUR FAULT.
IT'S YOUR FAULT.
IT'S YOUR FAULT.
SHUT UP!
THIS SPIDER-MAN WANTS TO HELP.
WHICH IS SHOCKING. I KNOW. ALWAYS I THINK, HE IS THREAT, HE IS MENACE.
BUT HE HELP ME.
AND WHEN HE SEE YOU, YOUR SHIP AND YOUR MONSTER, HE COULD HAVE SAY, "OH, IS NOT SPIDER-MAN'S PROBLEM. IS PROBLEM FOR CAPTAIN MARVEL OR BLOND PRETTY-MAN THOR.
"NOTHING SPIDER-MAN CAN DO, OH WELL."
HE COULD JUST GO ON, SAVE ONE PERSON, SLEEP GOOD AT NIGHT.
BUT HE TELL POLITE DINOSAUR BOY THAT THEY MUST HELP YOU. HELP US.
SO LET HIM.

"UHH, RIGHT, WHAT SHE SAID.
"LOOK, I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS GOING TO WORK...
"...BUT THERE'S A KID OUT THERE FIGHTING HIS HEART OUT FOR US.
"HE CAN'T BEAT THAT THING. HE CAN'T. HE KNOWS THAT.
"BUT HE'S FIGHTING ANYWAY. BECAUSE WE NEED HIM TO.
"HE KNOWS HIS CAPABILITIES.
"SO LET'S MAKE IT WORTH IT.
"LET'S SHOW THIS MONSTER WHAT HAPPENS...
"...WHEN YOU MESS WITH NEW YORK PUBLIC TRANSIT."

OKAY.
YOU AND ME, BIG GUY.
THIS IS WHAT IT ALL COMES DOWN TO.
LET'S DO OUR MOBY DICK ROUTINE.
I'VE BEEN TELLING MYSELF THAT THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
BUT WHEN SOMETHING IS YOUR FAULT, THAT MEANS YOU CLEAN IT UP.
"FROM HELL'S HEART I STAB AT THEE."
HEH.
YOU HANDLE IT. YOU TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.
AND RIGHT NOW, RIGHT HERE, I'M NOT SHAKING, I'M NOT PANICKING ANYMORE.

MY HEARTBEAT IS EVEN.

MY HANDS ARE STEADY.

I'M EXACTLY WHERE I SHOULD BE.

BETWEEN THE MONSTERS AND THE PEOPLE WHO NEED ME.
WHRRRKKK

...WOOO...
SPLARPP
WHUMP
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET!
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET WHEN YOU MESS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION!
GROSS.
WAIT, THE KID-- WHERE'S THE KID?
WOW, THAT WAS AMAZING!
YOU ZAPPED THAT THING INTO BLACK SNOT!
ARE YOU KIDDING? YOU WENT TOE TO TOE WITH--
WELL, WING TO FLIPPER--
WHATEVER! THAT WAS INCREDIBLE!
I AM GLAD YOU ARE NOT DEAD, POLITE DINOSAUR BOY.
I THINK I WILL TAKE FERRY REST OF WAY HOME.
THE FLYING, IT IS NOT SO GOOD FOR ME.
OKAY, MRS. VOLKOV, WHATEVER YOU WANT.

WELL, WE DID IT.
WE GOT MRS. VOLKOV HOME. WE HELPED ONE PERSON AND ENDED UP SAVING A BUNCH MORE.
SO... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
WHAT ARE YOU, NEW?
(JK, JK.)
WE DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN.
MAYBE WE CAN'T BEAT UP AN ALIEN SPACE GOD. BUT THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO NEED HELP TONIGHT.
YOU UP FOR IT?
OH YEAH.

Hey Abuelito
you still holding up okay?
boy i live in sparks Nevada
the sky is dark, that's it
stupid aliens aren't interested in anything in sparks Nevada
you okay?
Better than okay
Working with Spider-Man, saving people
should be home in sparks Nevada
where it's safe
I know where Sparks is, Abuelito. Don't have to keep telling me
THAT'S IT.
WE'RE UP.
don't get smart with me
stupid phone keeps changing it to sparks Nevada.
Gotta go
Love you
stay safe boy
you're the only one i have left
LET'S DO IT.

THIS IS PRETTY BAD.
ALIEN SNOT ALL OVER EVERYTHING, ALIEN DRAGONS (MADE OF, YOU GUESSED IT, ALIEN SNOT) FLYING AROUND AND EVEN WORSE THINGS RUNNING AROUND...
...I ALMOST FEEL BAD ABOUT HOW GOOD I FEEL.
I'VE BEEN IN BAD SPOTS.
HAVING THE ABSORBING MAN AND TITANIA COME AFTER ME, ALL HOPPED UP ON EVIL ASGARDIAN HAMMERS WHILE OUR INTERDIMENSIONAL BASE COLLAPSED INTO NOTHING.
GETTING MY BODY STOLEN BY MY OLDER SELF SO HE COULD KILL MY FRIENDS.
AND NEITHER OF THOSE SITUATIONS WERE ANYWHERE CLOSE TO...
...TO MURDERWORLD.

AFTER THAT?
AFTER 29 DAYS TRAPPED IN AN ARTIFICIAL WORLD WHERE A PSYCHO WAS THE NEXT BEST THING TO GOD, AFTER BEING FORCED TO FIGHT A BUNCH OF OTHER SUPER-POWERED KIDS, AFTER GETTING NUKED ALMOST TO DEATH...
...THIS IS NOTHING.
ALIEN INVASION? COOL. NO PROBLEM. I CAN WORK WITH THAT. CLASSIC HERO STUFF.
DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY ALIEN INVASIONS I'VE SEEN JUST IN MY LIFETIME? AND I CAN'T EVEN RENT A CAR!
I THINK IT'S OKAY.
WE SHOULD LEAVE SOME MONEY. WE CAN'T JUST TAKE THE WATER.
I MEAN, I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY.
ALL THOSE POCKETS AND YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY?
I'M A KID! I DON'T CARRY CASH! DON'T YOU HAVE ANY MONEY?
SIGH. ANOTHER SPIDER-I.O.U. IT IS.

NO, THIS IS SOMEWHERE I CAN DO GOOD.
MAYBE I'M NOT IN THE BOSS FIGHT.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND HERE.
AND NOT JUST THEM.
I'VE HAD THREE HEROES IN MY LIFE.
HECTOR AYALA. THE WHITE TIGER.
SHOT BY COPS.
HANK PYM. TOO MANY NAMES TO COUNT.
KILLED BY ULTRON.
AND SPIDER-MAN.
JUST...
JUST NEED A MINUTE...
THEY DON'T HAVE A MINUTE.
LET'S GET BACK OUT THERE.

I WANT TO BE A HERO.
I WANT TO BE AN AVENGER.
I WANT TO HELP PEOPLE.
AND THE BEST WAY I CAN DO THAT IS TO LEARN FROM ONE OF MY HEROES, BY DOING THE JOB.
AND BY BEING HERE WITH HIM--TO HAVE HIS BACK, TO MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T END UP LIKE ALL MY OTHER HEROES.
BECAUSE HE'S SPIDER-MAN.
HE'S THE REAL THING.

KING IN BLACK: SCREAM

WE ALL MAKE SACRIFICES.
A SUPER VILLAIN NAMED SHRIEK SACRIFICED HERSELF FOR THE ONE SHE LOVED...
TOO BAD IT WAS CARNAGE, AND HE REPAID HER BY RIPPING HER SPINE OUT.
HE USED HER BODY AS A VESSEL TO RESURRECT THE DEMON CALLED...
...DEMAGOBLIN.
NOW DEMAGOBLIN HAS BEEN LURING INNOCENT CHILDREN INTO HER OWN KIDDIE CULT.
TRAIL WENT COLD A FEW DAYS AGO.

BUT IT'S BEEN A CRAZY WEEK.
THE GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, KNULL, HAS COVERED THE WORLD IN A SYMBIOTE DOME AS HIS LEGION OF DRAGONS TERRORIZE AND DEVOUR THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY.
KNULL, THE CREATOR AND GOD OF THE SYMBIOTES, ONE OF HIS PETS NEARLY KILLED ME.
STILL. DEMAGOBLIN'S BEEN BRAINWASHING HOMELESS BOYS AND GIRLS INTO BLINDLY FOLLOWING HER.
SHE'S USING HER DEMONIC HELLFIRE TO HYPNOTIZE HER DISCIPLES.
ACOLYTES SHE CALLS THEM.
NO MORE.
WE WILL PUT HER BACK IN THE GROUND NOT JUST BURY HER.

...WE'RE SENDING HER ALL THE WAY BACK TO HELL, WHERE SHE BELONGS.
KRAAASSH

SCREAM! THERE YOU ARE, DARLING...
FOR WEEKS, WE SENSED A DARK FORCE COMING SINCE CLETUS KASADY RELEASED IT.
I WAS GETTING WORRIED YOU WOULDN'T FIND ME.
SLAK
KRASH
WITH SHRIEK'S ABILITIES AND HER HELLISH POWERS, DEMAGOBLIN IS DANGEROUS ENOUGH ON HER OWN. BUT NOW...
...SHE'S GOTTEN HERSELF AN ARMY.
YOU'RE TOO LATE.
AN ARMY OF KIDS.
DON'T YOU SEE? THE BLACK RAIN. THE LIVING ICHOR FROM THE SKY.
GOD SAID, "I SHALL SEND A GREAT PESTILENCE UPON YOU"...

BUT THIS TIME, IT IS A PESTILENCE THAT WALKS AMONG US! THAT FLIES THROUGH THE AIR AS MAGNIFICENT BEASTS!
THAT CONSUMES THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THIS CITY, DELIVERING THEM TO THEIR JUST REWARDS DESPITE THEIR PROTESTS! WE MUST WELCOME IT WITH OPEN ARMS!
DON'T HURT THEM, SCREAM.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE, ANDI.
I WAS JUST LIKE THEM. STILL AM, IN A WAY.
HURT. ALONE. NOWHERE TO GO. NO ONE TO HELP.
NOT ANY LONGER.
HAVE TO GET THEM TO SAFETY AND THEN DEAL WITH...
SSKRREEEE
SPLCH

SLAM
SUCH A WASTE! EVEN NOW I CAN FEEL YOUR TRUE POWERS SIMMERING WITHIN...
BUT YOU'D RATHER STIFLE YOUR GIFTS. SUPPRESS YOUR HELL-MARK AND ITS WONDROUS FIRE! A FLAME UNLIKE ANY OTHER ON EARTH, GIVEN TO YOU BY THE UNDERWORLD ITSELF!
KRIK
KRIK
ONLY SOMEONE UNWORTHY OF THEIR HELLFIRE WOULD SEE IT AS A CURSE.
SHUK
SHUK
SHUK
NOT A GIFT.
A CURSE.
OUR CURSE.
CRSSSHHH

AAAHAHAHAHAHA!
THOOOOM
TIME TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL!
KRASH
CAN'T CHASE AFTER DEMAGOBLIN NOW. SAVE HER FOR LATER.
FIRST WE NEED TO SAVE THE CHILDREN.
THAT MEANS WE MUST...
...ADAPT.

THIS SHOULD BE THE LAST OF THEM.
ARE YOU SURE? HARD TO SEE... TOO MUCH SMOKE.
THWIP
THERE. ONE MORE.
GOT YOU.
HOLD ON!

EVEN NOW THESE CHILDREN ARE TRAPPED IN DEMAGOBLIN'S SWAY.
THOOOM
MUST BE A FORM OF HER DARK EMPATHY.
SHE HAS DRAWN OUT THEIR PAIN, THEIR SENSE OF ABANDONMENT.
SHE MAKES THEM FEEL LIKE THEY FINALLY BELONG SOMEWHERE. NOW THEY BELONG TO HER.
KRRNCH
WH-WHA? WHERE AM I?
YOU'RE SAFE, CHILD. YOU ALL ARE.
GO TO F.E.A.S.T. IT'S TEN BLOCKS UP THAT WAY. FIND MAY PARKER. TELL HER THAT--
EEEKRREEEEEE!
AGH! CAN'T HEAR OURSELVES THINK UNDER DEMAGOBLIN'S SONIC SCREAM!

LOOK ABOUT YOU! THE ANGELS HERALD HIS ARRIVAL!
HIS WRATH IS NOW UPON US! LET THOSE WHO HAVE SINNED FALL TO THEIR KNEES!

DEMAGOBLIN HAS AN AERIAL ADVANTAGE
WE NEED MORE LEVERAGE
THERE YOU ARE! LOOK AT YOU...
...SCUTTLING TO HIDE, LIKE ALL THE OTHER VERMIN IN THIS CITY.
YOU CANNOT HIDE FROM GOD'S MIGHTY WRATH!
HIDE? WE DON'T WANT TO HIDE. WE'RE HERE TO...
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

...FLY.
CAN YOU FLY WITHOUT YOUR GLIDER, DEMAGOBLIN?
LET'S SEE!
GET OFF ME!
WHY NOT PRAY TO YOUR GOD NOW?
SEE IF HE ANSWERS!
SHUK
SHUK
THOOM

OOOF--
THAT ROOF CAME UP QUICKER THAN I THOUGHT.
THUD
MUST PICK OURSELVES UP BEF--
YOU ARE SUCH A WASTE OF A HELL-MARK!
HUMANS, ALWAYS RUNNING FROM YOUR DEMONS! TRYING TO HIDE WHO YOU ARE!
WHAT YOU TRULY ARE...
DON'T YOU SEE? YOU'RE NOT WRESTLING WITH YOUR INNER DEMONS...
SNAK
YOU ARE A DEMON.
FW
NOOOOO
FWWOOOOOOOM
PLLEEEEASE

SSSHK
YOU ARE RIGHT, DEMAGOBLIN... ENOUGH TURMOIL.
GLLK!
ENOUGH TRAUMA.
WE ARE TIRED OF BELIEVING WE ARE A VICTIM.
OUR PAIN HAS MADE US STRONGER. OUR SCARS ARE OUR HISTORY...
SHK
...AND OUR SCREAMS ARE OUR LEGACY.
SHK
SHK
LEGACY, YES. HISTORY, OF COURSE. THAT'S ALL THAT'LL BE LEFT OF YOU...
LOOK.
I DON'T NEED TO LOOK. I... WE ALREADY FEEL IT. FEEL HIM.

KNULL
THE KING IN BLACK.
CAN YOU FEEL IT? HIS POWER?
HARK! THE LORD HAS SENT ME A DELIVERER! THE PESTILENT KING HIMSELF!
TOO LATE, SCREAM...TOO LATE TO SAVE YOUR INNOCENT CHILDREN.
TOO LATE TO SAVE THIS MISERABLE CITY.
THE COLD DARK THAT SWEEPS OVER?
KNULL IS HERE.
WE COME FROM THAT DARKNESS THAT DARKNESS WAS OUR HOME.
LET HIS CLEANSING COMMENCE!

THE CLOSER HE COMES THE MORE THAT DARKNESS SWEEPS OVER US.
SEEPS INTO US.
OH, HOLY MASTER...WE KNEEL BEFORE THEE...
WE DO NOT DESERVE TO BE GRACED BY YOUR PRESSENSSSS--
SILENCE.
THUK
YOU TALK TOO MUCH.
MMPH-HRMM-HMMPH!
LEAVE US.

YOU. WE HAVE SENSED YOU AND THE FAINT LIGHT WITHIN YOU BEFORE.
UH.
WHY ARE WE NOT FIGHTING?
CAN'T.
CAN'T BRING OURSELVES TO HURT A GOD...
OUR GOD.
YOU HAVE BEEN A THORN IN MY SIDE SINCE I FIRST WOKE. YOU EVADED CARNAGE, AND YOU KILLED ONE OF MY CHILDREN.
I INTEND TO REPAY YOU IN KIND, YOU...
...AND YOUR HOST.
I WILL REND YOU FROM HER FIRST. THEN HER FLESH. THEN THE LITTLE SPARK THAT BURNS WITHIN HER.
YOU WANT THE LIGHT INSIDE OF US? COME AND TAKE IT.
SUCH SPIRIT!
LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU FARE AGAINST ANOTHER OF MY DRAGONS, NOW THAT THEIR MASTER IS NEAR.
SPLOOOSH
I FEEL KNULL'S PSYCHIC ASSAULT THE SECOND THE DRAGON TOUCHES ME, AND I'M NOT ALONE.

MY SYMBIOTE FELT IT TOO.
TOO POWERFUL...
I'M SORRY. AND I...
I KNOW. SCREAM. BUT I NEED YOU RIGHT NOW. BECAUSE RIGHT NOW...
...WE'RE FALLING!
CAN'T REGAIN OUR BALANCE. CAN'T KEEP OURSELVES FROM--
MY PROGENY HAVE TOILED SO HARD. THEY DESERVE A NEW TOY.
SWOMP
SOMETHING TO PLAY WITH.
SSSSNK
PAIN. TRYING TO MINIMIZE THE PAIN.
THERE'S TOO MUCH...
TOO MUCH--

--PAIN.
SCREAM?
HOLD ON TO ME!
STAY WITH ME!
SCREAM?!
DON'T LET G--

SMASH
DON'T DON'T DON'T
D-DON'T... LET GO... OF...
MEEE...
GET UP
GOT TO...
...FIGHT
FIGHT
THAT'S IT. COME ON. YOU CAN DO IT.
WE CAN DO IT.
FIGHT FIRE...

...WITH HELLFIRE.
FWWWOOOOOOM
SSKRREEEEEEEE!
SSSKREEEEEE--
SCOOOLP
RRRAAAAWR!
NOT HAPPENING TODAY. SORRY...
LEARN FROM OUR PAIN. FEEL IT. UNDERSTAND IT.

HARNESS IT.
OUR PAIN IS OUR STRENGTH.
FWOOOOOM!!

HOW UNFORTUNATE.
THE GALAXY HAS SULLIED MY PROGENY. THEIR HOSTS HAVE TAINTED THEIR PURITY.
CORRUPTED THEM WITH WILLFULNESS. INSOLENCE. IT IS TIME YOU LEARNED TO...
...RESPECT YOUR ELDERS.

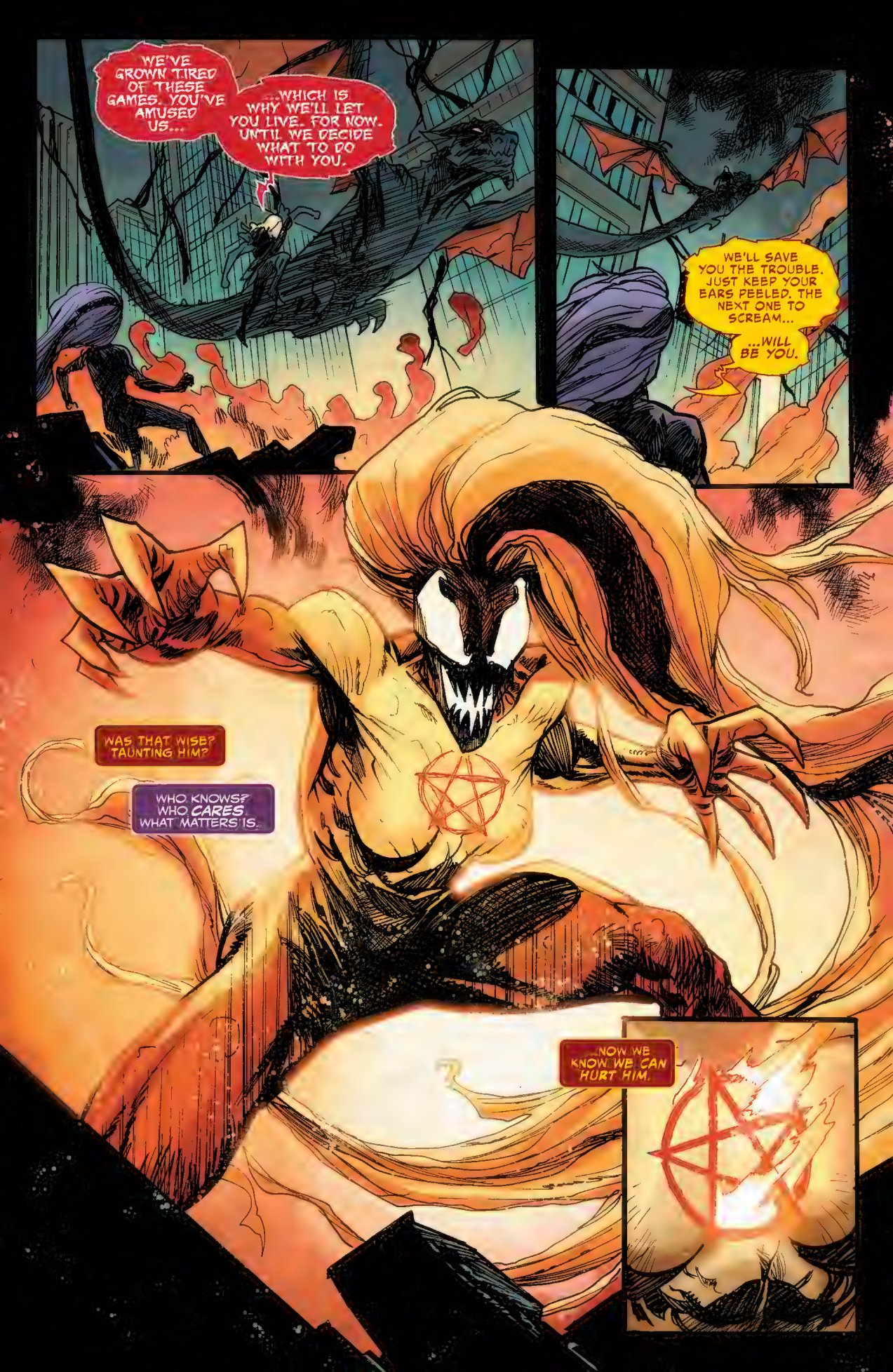
NEVER!
SKRRREEEEEE!
KRSHH
WHEN WILL YOU LEARN?
YOU CANNOT STOP ME.
THOOM
YOU CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND MY POWER.
I KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS BEFORE THEY MANIFEST EVEN WITHIN YOUR OWN MIND.
SPLCK
SPLCK
SPLCK
I KNOW BECAUSE YOUR THOUGHTS ARE MY THOUGHTS.
CHOP
YOUR BLOOD IS MY BLOOD.
JOIN ME.
THUK
IT IS YOUR ONLY HOPE FOR LIVING ANOTHER DAY.

NOT TRUE.
WE NOW HAVE FIRE.
HELLFIRE.
HERE. HAVE SOME!
YES, AND! CAN FEEL IT THROUGH THE HIVE! THIS HURTS HIM! HE IS WOUNDED...
FWWOOOSHH
...AND PISSED. GUESS THIS GOD'S NOT AS INVINCIBLE AS HE THINKS HE IS.
WELL, WELL, YOU CERTAINLY ARE FULL OF SURPRISES.

I DON'T LIKE SURPRISES.
TIME TO EXTINGUISH YOUR TINY FLAME.
LOOK UPON ME, CHILD. SEE THE FACE OF YOUR DEMISE.
WE HAVE A BETTER IDEA...
OH? INDULGE US.
LISTEN CLOSELY, AND HEAR USSS...

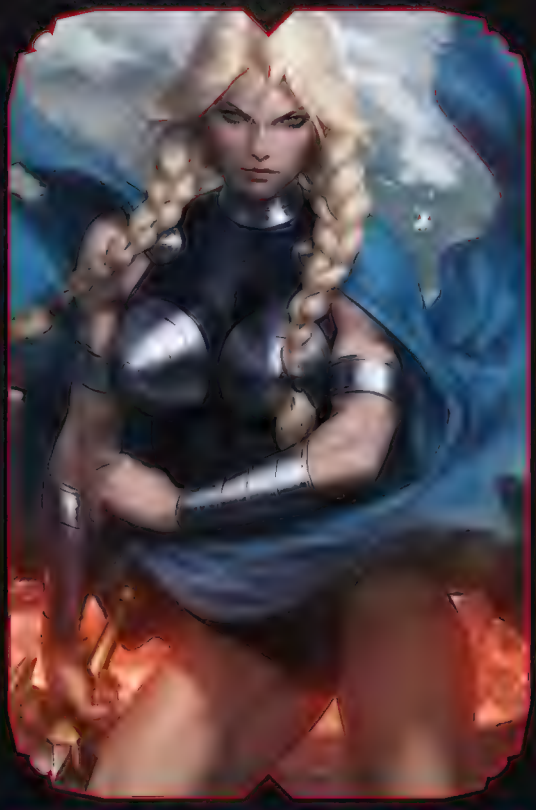
KAABOOOM
BROWN
MCLEOD
SCREEEAAAM!

HOW...
HOW DOES ONE....
HOW DOES ONE HARNESSSS...
HHOW DOES ONE HARNESS SSSUCH...
SIMPLE. IT'S ALL WE'VE EVER FELT. ALL WE'VE EVER HAD.
IT'S WHAT BONDS US. MAKES USS ONE.
FORGED IN HELLFIRE.
KRVK
...PAIN?

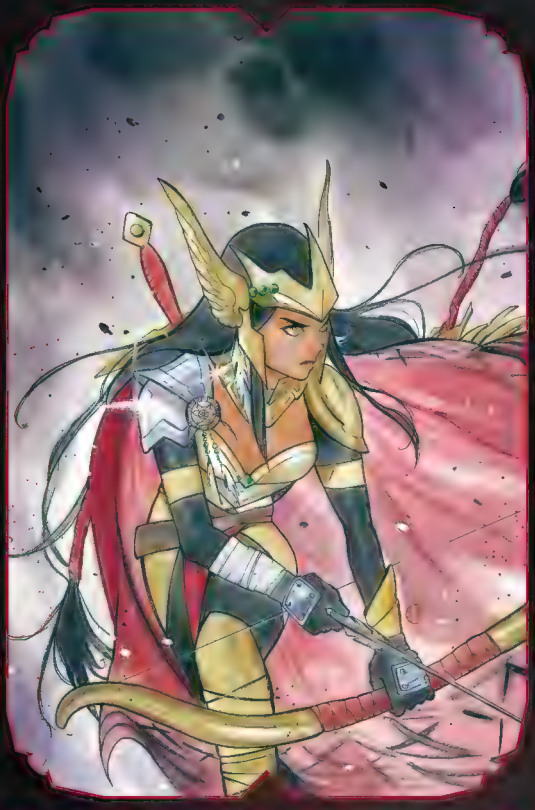

WE'VE GROWN TIRED OF THESE GAMES. YOU'VE AMUSED US...
...WHICH IS WHY WE'LL LET YOU LIVE. FOR NOW. UNTIL WE DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH YOU.
WE'LL SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE. JUST KEEP YOUR EARS PEELED. THE NEXT ONE TO SCREAM...
...WILL BE YOU.
WAS THAT WISE? TAUNTING HIM?
WHO KNOWS? WHO CARES. WHAT MATTERS IS...
...NOW WE KNOW WE CAN HURT HIM.

KING IN BLACK: CAPTAIN AMERICA VARIANT BY
BUTCH GUICE & ROMULO FAJARDO JR.

KING IN BLACK: CAPTAIN AMERICA
BLACK HISTORY MONTH VARIANT BY
ERNANDA SOUZA



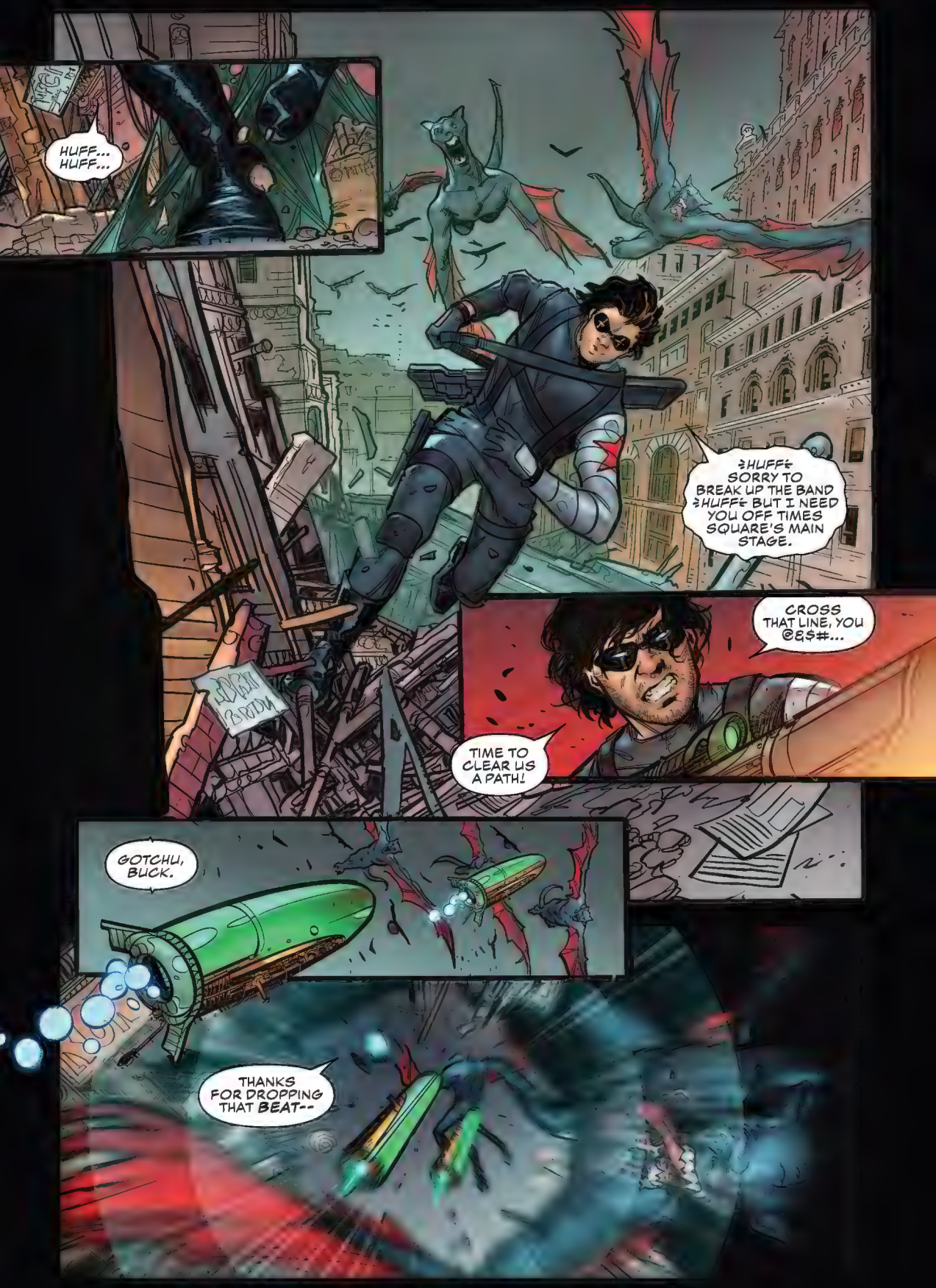
KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1 VARIANT BY
STANLEY "ARTGERM" LAU



KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1 VARIANT BY
PEACH MOMOKO

KING IN BLACK: CAPTAIN AMERICA

BLACKENED BLUE


HUFF... HUFF...
HUFF SORRY TO BREAK UP THE BAND *HUFF* BUT I NEED YOU OFF TIMES SQUARE'S MAIN STAGE.
CROSS THAT LINE, YOU @&$#...
TIME TO CLEAR US A PATH!
GOTCHU, BUCK.
THANKS FOR DROPPING THAT BEAT--

--FALCON.
AS LONG AS YOU NEVER CALL SOUND GRENADES "THE BEAT" AGAIN, YOU'RE WELCOME.
LET'S GET TO THE NEXT CHECKPOINT AND MOUNT A DEFENSE...
...BEFORE THEY RE-FORM OR HEAL OR WHATEVER.
SAM, YOU'VE GOT MORE INCOMING!
@$%&!
THESE SYMBIOTE DRAGONS DON'T STAY DOWN!
I KNOW THE MISSION BRIEF IS PULLING AS MANY OF THE SYMBIOTES AS WE CAN AWAY FROM VENOM AND THE OTHERS, BUT--
WHICH WE'RE DOING-- LOOK, THEY'RE BREAKING...
...AWAY...

THIS IS A HELL OF A WAY TO DEFINE SUCCESS, BUCK!
VOCAB WASN'T MY STRONGEST CLASS IN SCHOOL.
NO WAY THAT WAS A CLASS FOR YOU, EVEN BACK IN THE STONE AGE.
EXACTLY MY POINT.
WHOOOSH!
SKREEEEE!
SKREEEEE!
SKREEEEE!
SHOOOSH!
LOOKS LIKE YOUR FAVORITE TEACH IS SHOWING UP.
I'M GONNA STOP YOU BEFORE YOU MAKE ANY JOKES ABOUT EXTRA TUTORING.
I WAS GONNA GO WITH TEACHER'S PET, ACTUALLY.

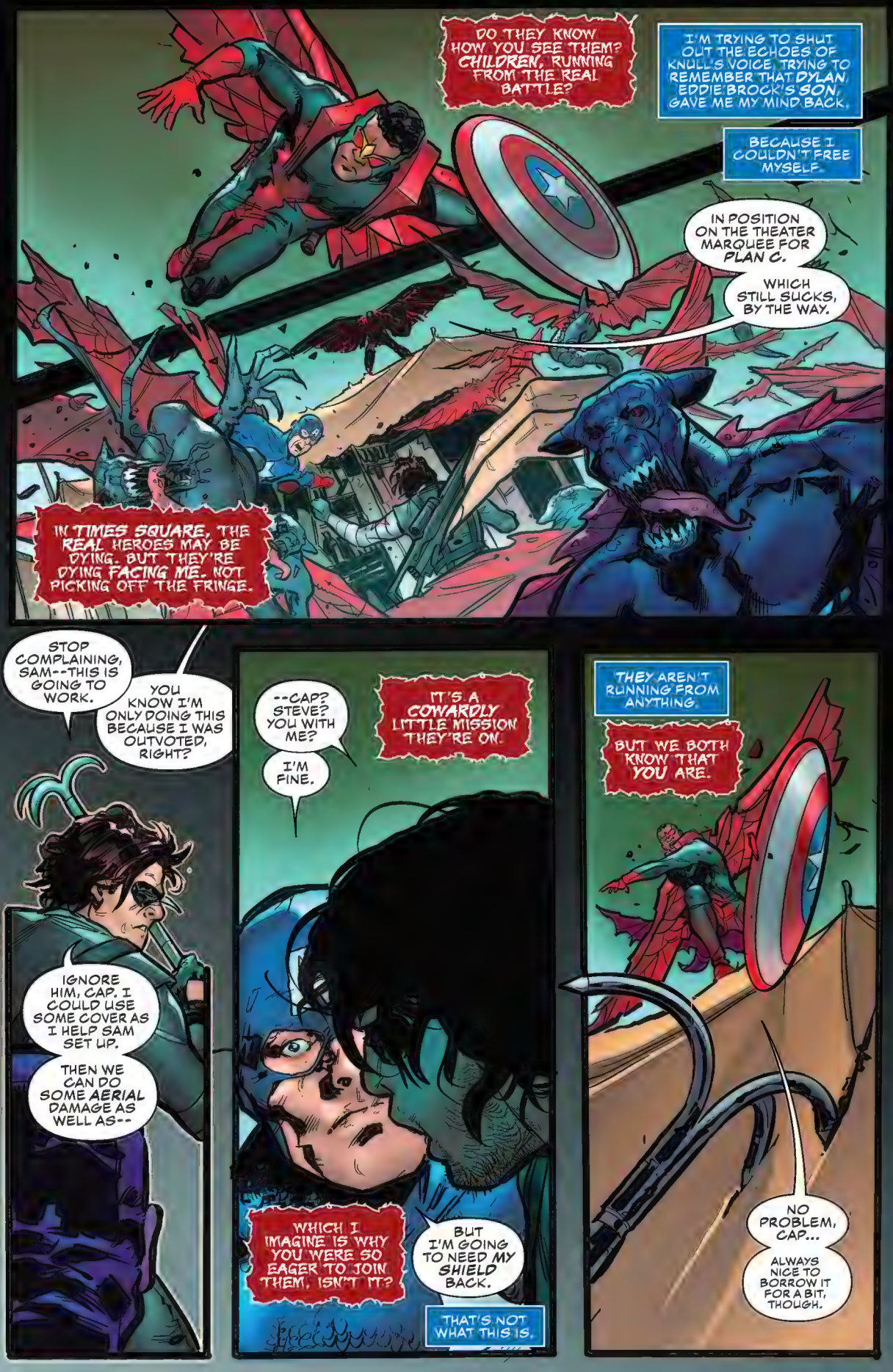
"DEFINITELY STOPPING THAT ONE."

HEARD YOU GUYS COULD USE A HAND.

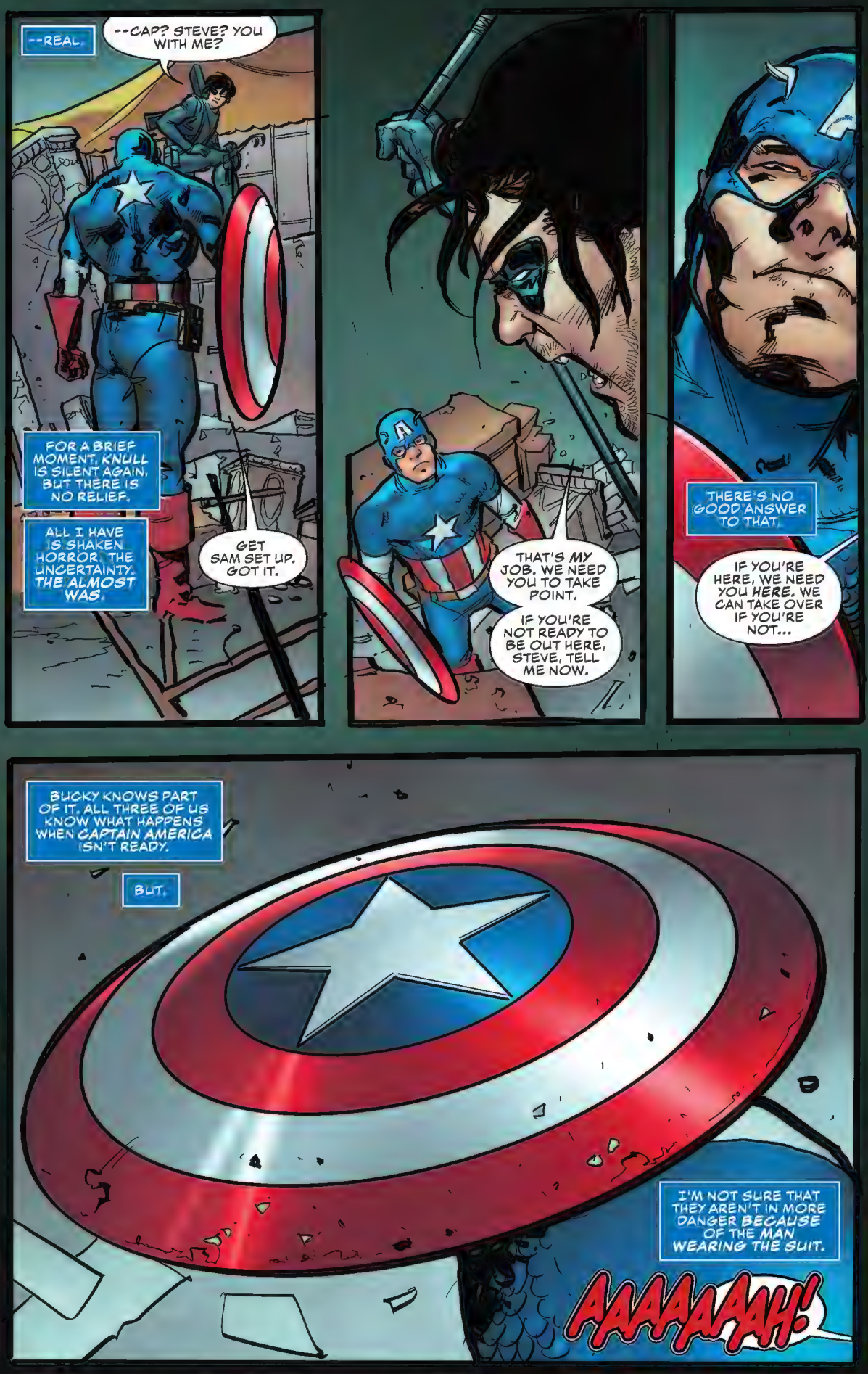
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?

I KNOW WHAT IMAGE PEOPLE SEE WHEN I SHOW UP. I'VE HAD IT DESCRIBED TO ME PLENTY OF TIMES.

GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK IN THE GAME, CAP.
YOU SURE IT'S NOT TOO SOON AFTER...?
IT'S NOT. I APPRECIATE THE CONCERN, THOUGH.
I'M JUST SAYING...MOST FOLKS MIGHT NEED A DAY OFF AFTER GETTING POSSESSED BY A GOD.
AT LEAST A COUPLE HOURS.
TAKING A BREATHER? HAVE YOU MET STEVE?
IMMEDIATELY, MY PRESENCE GIVES THEM A SECOND WIND. I CAN SEE IT IN THEIR EYES. THE WAY THAT THEY RALLY.
BUCKY, HEADS UP!
THEY TRUST ME TO BE THE MAN WORTHY OF THE SHIELD.
GOT IT!
THE TRUST IS THE REASON WE WORK SO WELL TOGETHER.
UNF!
THEY DON'T DEMAND THAT I PROVE WHO I AM. WHAT I'M HERE TO DO.
FEEEE!
BUT DO THEY REALIZE HOW MUCH OF A LIAR YOU ARE, STEVE ROGERS?


DO THEY KNOW HOW YOU SEE THEM? CHILDREN, RUNNING FROM THE REAL BATTLE?
I'M TRYING TO SHUT OUT THE ECHOES OF KNULL'S VOICE, TRYING TO REMEMBER THAT DYLAN, EDDIE BROCK'S SON, GAVE ME MY MIND BACK.
BECAUSE I COULDN'T FREE MYSELF.
IN POSITION ON THE THEATER MARQUEE FOR PLAN C.
WHICH STILL SUCKS, BY THE WAY.
IN TIMES SQUARE, THE REAL HEROES MAY BE DYING. BUT THEY'RE DYING FACING ME. NOT PICKING OFF THE FRINGE.
STOP COMPLAINING, SAM--THIS IS GOING TO WORK.
YOU KNOW I'M ONLY DOING THIS BECAUSE I WAS OUTVOTED, RIGHT?
IGNORE HIM, CAP. I COULD USE SOME COVER AS I HELP SAM SET UP.
THEN WE CAN DO SOME AERIAL DAMAGE AS WELL AS--
--CAP? STEVE? YOU WITH ME?
I'M FINE.
IT'S A COWARDLY LITTLE MISSION THEY'RE ON.
WHICH I IMAGINE IS WHY YOU WERE SO EAGER TO JOIN THEM, ISN'T IT?
BUT I'M GOING TO NEED MY SHIELD BACK.
THAT'S NOT WHAT THIS IS.
THEY AREN'T RUNNING FROM ANYTHING.
BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT YOU ARE.
NO PROBLEM, CAP...
ALWAYS NICE TO BORROW IT FOR A BIT, THOUGH.

WHY DON'T I BORROW YOU FOR A MOMENT, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
YOUR PHILOSOPHICAL WHINING IS HOLDING UP THE INEVITABLE.
STOP ACTING AS IF THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE LOST CONTROL.
ACCEPT THAT YOU WILL HURT THE ONES YOU LOVE, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
IF YOU STOPPED SCREAMING INTO THE VOID FOR A MOMENT, YOU'D REALIZE THIS IS HARDLY YOUR FAULT. YOU CANNOT HELP BEING A PERFECT VEHICLE FOR VIOLENCE AND BETRAYAL.
BUCK? STEVE? OH MY G--
AFTER ALL...
...WOULD THIS BE HAPPENING IF YOU HADN'T JOINED THE FIGHT IN THE FIRST PLACE?
FINALLY. I THINK WE'RE GETTING TO THE TRUTH OF IT.
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING. THIS ISN'T--


--REAL.
--CAP? STEVE? YOU WITH ME?
FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, KNULL IS SILENT AGAIN, BUT THERE IS NO RELIEF.
ALL I HAVE IS SHAKEN HORROR. THE UNCERTAINTY. THE ALMOST WAS.
GET SAM SET UP. GOT IT.
THAT'S MY JOB. WE NEED YOU TO TAKE POINT.
IF YOU'RE NOT READY TO BE OUT HERE, STEVE, TELL ME NOW.
THERE'S NO GOOD ANSWER TO THAT.
IF YOU'RE HERE, WE NEED YOU HERE. WE CAN TAKE OVER IF YOU'RE NOT...
BUCKY KNOWS PART OF IT. ALL THREE OF US KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA ISN'T READY.
BUT.
I'M NOT SURE THAT THEY AREN'T IN MORE DANGER BECAUSE OF THE MAN WEARING THE SUIT.
AAAAAAAH!

WHO WAS THAT?
AAAAA!
GOT EYES ON THREE CIVILIANS, CAP!
GET OUT OF THERE, DEC!
I CAN'T! MY COUSIN, ADRIENNE, SHE'S STILL DOWN THERE!
I CAN GET OVER THERE AND--
NO.
BUCK SAID HE NEEDS YOU SUITED UP.
I GOT THIS.
I LIE TO THEM.
YOU LIE TO YOURSELF.

SWSSSSH
YOU ARE DISGUSTINGLY DRAMATIC.
DO YOU THINK THAT IF YOU PUT ON A THEATER OF SAVING THESE WORTHLESS CREATURES, YOU WILL SOMEHOW BECOME WHAT THEY THINK YOU ARE?
OH MY GOD, IS THAT--
=GASP= ADRIENNE, COME UP HERE-- IT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THE MAN WHO DOES WHAT NEEDS DOING.
YOU PERFORM A ROLE FOR THEM.
EVEN WHEN NO ONE APPLAUDS.

WHAP!
I'VE GOT YOU!
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SAID THOSE WORDS? DO YOU BELIEVE THEM?
I'VE GOT YOU. I'VE GOT YOU. I'VE--
DID YOU KNOW THAT NO AMOUNT OF REPETITION MAKES YOUR TRUENESS A REALITY?
ARGH! NO...IT'S... CONSUMING...
DID YOU FORGET ALREADY HOW LITTLE IT TAKES TO SLITHER IN, TO CONTROL YOU? TO MAKE YOU A LIE?
YOU ARE A FOOL.
HOW DARE YOU TELL ANYONE YOU'VE "GOT THEM"...
...WHEN YOU CAN'T EVEN CONTROL YOURSELF?
THIS CAN'T BE REAL...

...BUT DOES IT MATTER?
I CAN FLY OVER AND--
NO!
BUCKY, HELP THE CIVILIANS. I'LL SET SAM UP.
WHAT? THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. YOU BARELY KNOW HOW THAT THING WORKS, AND--
I NEED YOU TO DO THIS, BUCKY. TRUST ME.
OF COURSE I TRUST YOU, THAT'S NOT THE POINT--
I DON'T KNOW IF BUCKY SEES ME FLINCH.
HELP!
FINE. SAM CAN TALK YOU THROUGH IT.
YOU SHOULD HAVE THANKED HIM FOR COVERING FOR YOUR COWARDICE.
BUCKY WOULD NEVER ACCEPT IT.

SONIC GRENADES OUT!
COVER YOUR EARS!
ADRIENNE, YOUR EARS!
BUT MY DOLL--
NO!
YOU WANNA PLAY, YOU GIANT TAR SOUP?
CLUNK!
PLAY WITH THIS!
BLAM!
VRMMMMM
VRMMMMMMMM
BLAM! BLAM!
LET'S WORK ON GETTING YOU OUTTA HERE.
THANK YOU.
YOU'RE SAFE, JANIE!

IT ISN'T LIKE YOU TO WASTE SECONDS, CAP.
SHOULDN'T HAVE CHANGED THE PLAN. SAM KNOWS ME TOO WELL, SEES THROUGH ME.
BETTER THAN RISKING THE CIVILIANS, I TELL MYSELF.
GIVE ME A WEAPON, I CAN SHOO--
APPRECIATE THE OFFER, BUT STAY BACK!
YOU NEED TO TELL US SOMETHING?
NO, NO, JUST--
ANY TIME NOW, SAM!
FINE, BUT WE'RE DEALING WITH THIS LATER.
IT'S EASY TO PRETEND THE REASON I DON'T SPEAK UP IS BECAUSE WE HAVE SO LITTLE TIME.

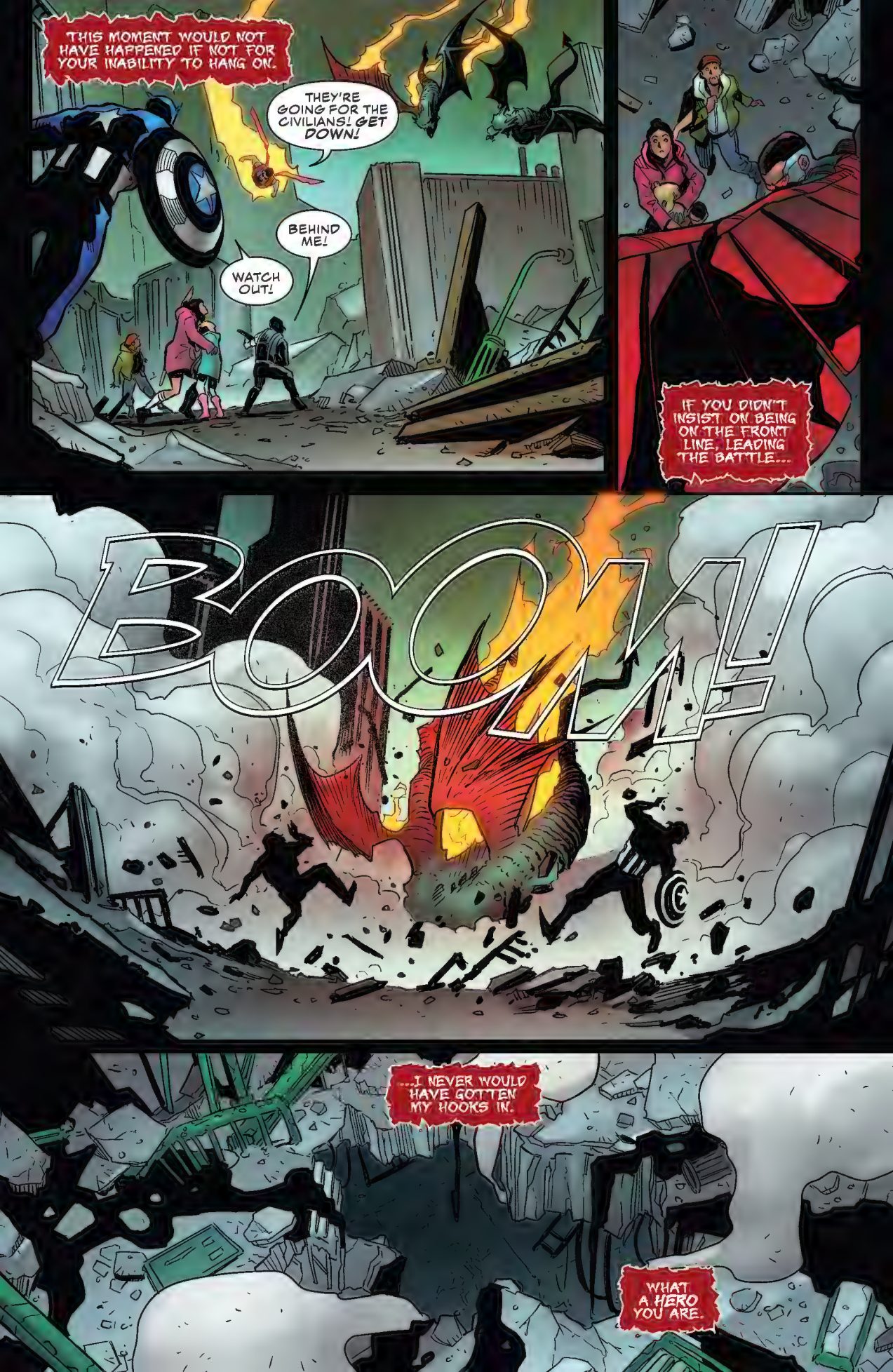
TIME TO LIGHT UP THE SKY!

FWWWOOSH!
SKREE!
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD HIM THE TRUTH.
ARGH! I'M HIT, CAP--
SMACK!
SHSSSSH
CRACK!
BUT HOW DO YOU TELL YOUR BUDDIES HOW HARD YOU'VE FALLEN?
OWF!
CAP?!
DON'T WORRY, CAPTAIN ROGERS.
SMASH!
WHOOF... BUCK, MAN, THAT DIDN'T... FEEL LIKE... A MISS...
I WILL TELL THEM FOR YOU.
IT WASN'T.

STEVE! I'M HIT!
NO, IT WASN'T REAL.
BUT THIS IS.
GRRAGH!
FEELING LIKE CORN THAT'S ABOUT TO POP HERE!
GOT ANYMORE OF THOSE SOUND BOMBS? MY GRENADE THROWING ARM'S STILL PRETTY GOOD.
NOT YOUR WAR, POPS. I GOT THIS. BUT SPEAKING OF--
--WHICH ONE WAS YOURS?
SAME ONE AS YOU, KIDDO. SAME ONE AS YOU.
UGH!
WHIPPPP
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO PANIC OR MAKE A DECISION.

INSTEAD, I GO INTO ACTION.
I GRAB SOUND GRENADES.
I IGNORE THE SNARLS.
BOTH THE CREATURE'S... AND KNULL'S.
I DROP GRENADES AS AUTOMATICALLY AS I PICKED THEM UP.
THE SYMBIOTE MASS RECOILS FROM THE VIBRATIONS. I DON'T LOOK BELOW ME.
VRMMM
VRMMM
EVEN AS KNULL'S SNARLING TAUNTS GROW IN MY EARS I KEEP MOVING.

I'M BARELY HANGING ON.
SO I CLING.
KRK!
UNTIL MY FINGERS SLIP.
SKREEEEEEEE!
SLAM!
ARGH!
HOW MANY TIMES MUST YOU FALL BEFORE YOU UNDERSTAND?
YOU SLIP AND EVERYTHING FALLS APART.


THIS MOMENT WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IF NOT FOR YOUR INABILITY TO HANG ON.
THEY'RE GOING FOR THE CIVILIANS! GET DOWN!
BEHIND ME!
WATCH OUT!
IF YOU DIDN'T INSIST ON BEING ON THE FRONT LINE, LEADING THE BATTLE...
BOOM!
...I NEVER WOULD HAVE GOTTEN MY HOOKS IN.
WHAT A HERO YOU ARE.

...KNULL IS RIGHT.
34 St
I'VE GOT THE CIVILIANS! BRUISED BUT ALIVE... BUCKY?
I'M...IN ONE PIECE. ARM'S NEAR SHOT THOUGH.
CAP?
...CAP?
STEVE?!
I'VE BEEN SO SELFISH.

THE SHIELD. THE COSTUME. THE NAME. IT'S SO SELFISH.
EVERY TIME I WEAR THEM, I AM A BEACON. A SYMBOL.
A TARGET.
KNULL ISN'T THE FIRST. I'VE WATCHED MYSELF BECOME THE WRONG KIND OF BEACON AGAIN AND AGAIN.
THE ENEMY WEARS MY FACE.
THE VILLAIN REACHES OUT MY HAND.
THE MONSTER ANSWERS THEIR CRIES.
AND MY PRESENCE NO LONGER INSPIRES.

INSTEAD--
--MY--
--PRESENCE--
--INFECTS!

I CAN'T REACH THE SHIELD. I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD.
COME ON, WE'VE GOTTA GET YOU AWAY FROM HERE.
THOSE DRAGONS MIGHT NOT BE DOWN HERE YET, GUYS, BUT WE'RE STILL RUNNING A TIGHT SCHEDULE.
MORE SYMBIOTE GOO IS POURING IN.
STEVE!
TANGLED IN THIS DARN HARNESS...
BIG MAN'S OKAY, BUCKY.
I CAN'T...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, STEVE. WE'VE GOT YOU.
NO, I MEAN--
--KNULL... HE...
STOP.

"WHATEVER YOU'RE ABOUT TO SAY, ASK YOURSELF: IS IT WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY?
"OR WHAT HE'D WANT YOU TO SAY?"
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
YOU THINK WE DON'T KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO LOSE OURSELVES?
LOOK, I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT VOICE WILL EVER GO AWAY, STEVE. SURE HASN'T FOR ME, BUT--
"--WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN HAS GOT TO BE STRONGER.
"WILL ALWAYS BE STRONGER."

BUCKY'S WRONG ABOUT ONE THING.
BECAUSE RIGHT NOW? KNULL'S VOICE HAS GONE AWAY.
THANK YOU. BOTH OF YOU.
ANY TIME, CAP.
URGH...
NOT THIS TIME, BOYS.
THEY SAVED ME FROM MY OWN FEARS.
THANK US BY POINTING--OOF--US WHERE YOU NEED US.
SKREE!
SKREE!
I THINK I CAN HANDLE A FEW MONSTERS IN A TUNNEL.
GET READY TO GET THE CIVILIANS OUT FAST.

SKREE!
SKREE!
SKREE!
I KNOW THIS SINGLE FLAME-GRENADE WON'T TAKE THEM OUT.
BUT NOW THAT I'M NOT DROWNING IN MY OWN FEARS, I KNOW IT DOESN'T NEED TO.
IT JUST NEEDS TO SPARK SOMETHING BIGGER.
CLINK
AND WHILE IT SPARKS I HOLD FIRM.

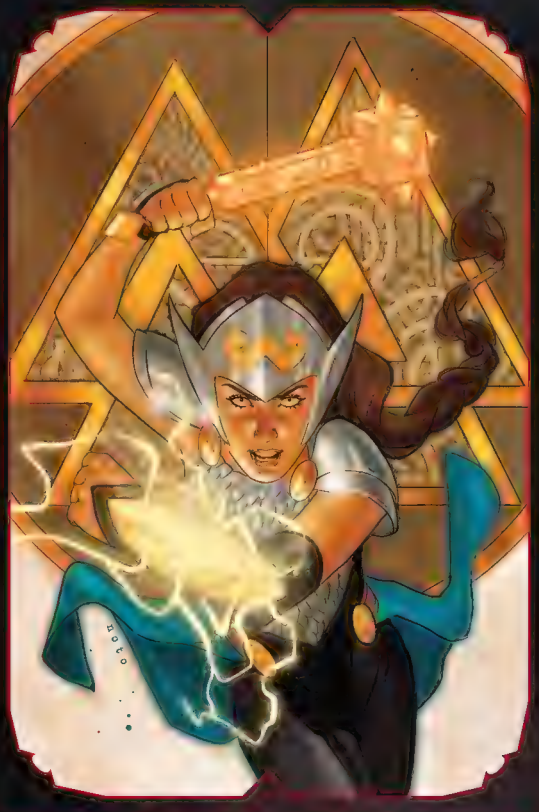
TOLD YOU!
NOT DOING THIS.
THANK YOU SO MUCH CAP! YOU SAVED US!
NO, THANK YOU, DEC--YOU STAYED ALERT AND HELPED PROTECT LITTLE ADRIENNE HERE...
WE'VE GONE THROUGH ENOUGH HELL THAT IT'S EASY FOR THEM TO GO BACK AND FORTH. IT'S A COMFORT, FOR ME AT LEAST.
"OH, IT WON'T GO BADLY!" "THIS IS THE BEST IDEA HE'S EVER HAD!"
SHUT...UP... AND...HELP... ME...
WHY DON'T YOU ASK CLINT $%@& BARTON TO HELP, SINCE THIS "FLAMING WINGS" BIT WAS ALL HIS IDEA?
BUCKY SAID MY CONVICTIONS HAD TO BE LOUDER, STRONGER.
OH, RIGHT, YOU CAN'T, BECAUSE I'M THE ONE THAT HAD TO WEAR THIS--
COME ON, GUYS. ONCE WE'VE GOT THESE THREE SITUATED, WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.
BUT THEIR BELIEF IN ME HELPS DRIVE BACK THE DARKNESS JUST AS MUCH.
THERE'S A WAR GOING ON, AND IT NEEDS GOOD PEOPLE ON THE FRONT LINE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MONSTER WILL TRY TO SLIP THROUGH THE CRACKS OF SELF-DOUBT NEXT--USE US FOR THEIR OWN CAUSE.
ALL I KNOW IS THIS...
IT'S TIME TO GET BACK TO THE FIGHT.

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1 VARIANT BY
PHIL NOTO

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #2 VARIANT BY
PHIL NOTO

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #3 VARIANT BY
PHIL NOTO



KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #4 VARIANT BY
PHIL NOTO

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1

NOT THIS PLACE.
NOT AGAIN.
THIS IS WHERE I FAIL.
THIS IS WHERE SHE DIES.
NO.
PLEASE.
I CAN'T TAKE IT.

EARTH'S ORBIT.
WHERE THE SENTRY DIED.
ROBERT REYNOLDS. THE SENTRY. ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL HEROES TO EVER GRACE THE WORLD OF MEN.
LOOK.
MY HEART IS RIGHT THERE. BROKEN INTO TINY PIECES.
LITERALLY STONE COLD--LIKE IT'S BEEN ACCUSED OF BEING MANY TIMES BEFORE, BY THE WAY.
YET I HAVE NEVER FELT MORE LOVE.
UNCOMPLICATED AND PURE.
WHAT MERCY DEATH BRINGS AN OLD MAN.
(HE IS ALSO ARGUABLY PRONE TO DRAMATICS.)
I'M SORRY, IT FEELS LIKE I KNOW YOU, BUT WE HAVEN'T...
I KNOW. I'M VALKYRIE.
A VALKYRIE! AMAZING. I'M SORRY, THIS IS ALL NEW TO ME.
BUT YOU CAN CALL ME JANE.
DYING IS NEW TO EVERYONE.
DID YOU KNOW LIFE FLASHES BEFORE YOUR EYES? JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIES. EXCEPT IT WAS ONLY THE GOOD BITS.

JANE FOSTER IS NOT ONE TO LOSE HOPE.
WHAT DID YOU SEE?
LINDY LEE, MY WIFE. BEFORE...WELL, EVERYTHING.
AND BILLY. NORMIE. SILLY THINGS...
THAT ONE TIME I TOLD LINDY A JOKE, AND SHE LAUGHED SO MUCH SHE DROPPED THE PLATE SHE WAS CARRYING. SHE EVEN SAID SHE PEED A LITTLE.
AS KNULL WAS TEARING ME TO PIECES LIKE I WAS YESTERDAY'S NEWSPAPER,* THE UNIVERSE DECIDED TO SHOW ME THAT I ONCE MADE A WOMAN LAUGH SO MUCH, SHE PEED A LITTLE.
*IN KING IN BLACK #1! --WIL
WHICH MAKES ME THINK DEATH IS EITHER MERCIFUL OR A LIAR. OR HE'S GOT A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR, BECAUSE WHATEVER MY LIFE HAS BEEN, THERE HAVE BEEN MORE TEARS THAN LAUGHTER.
SHE. AND I THINK YOU HAD MORE TO DO WITH IT THAN DEATH.
HEH. MAYBE.
"BUT YOU KNOW WHAT HURTS THE MOST?
"I SAW THAT TIME I FLEW OUT HERE, JUST TO SEE IF I COULD. MY FIRST TIME IN SPACE, LOOKING BACK AT EARTH. OUR FRAGILE WONDER OF A PLANET. AND IT CHANGED ME. PROFOUNDLY SO."
BUT IN THIS STOLEN MOMENT OF PEACE, SHE WONDERS IF THIS IS THE END.

BENEATH KNULL'S DOME OVER EARTH, THE BATTLE IS WAITING. RIGHT WHERE SHE LEFT OFF.
AND LOOK AT IT NOW. THEY'RE ALL STILL DOWN THERE.
THIS WAS MY FIGHT, JANE. I WAS MADE FOR THIS. AND I FAILED.
I DON'T THINK I WOULD HAVE MINDED DEATH IF IT COUNTED FOR SOMETHING.
IF I COULD HAVE TAKEN KNULL DOWN WITH ME.
THE SUM OF YOUR LIFE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE END.
I SUPPOSE.
BUT WHEN DEATH IS ALL THAT'S LEFT, THE HOW MATTERS.
IF YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
I DO, ROBERT.
IT'S TIME TO GO NOW. VALHALLA AWAITS.
SHE DOES NOT TELL HIM WHAT SHE SEES WHEN SHE LOOKS DOWN AT EARTH.
WHICH IS A KIND OF MERCY.

NO, I CAN'T...
THAT'S BETTER.
I LOVE THIS SONG.
OKAY, SO WE HAVE KARRA NUTS, AN AGALORIAN SUNSET--EXTRA RUM, EXTRA ICE AND NO GACO JUICE.
WHICH I THINK DISQUALIFIES IT FROM BEING AN AGALORIAN SUNSET, BUT WHAT DO I KNOW, I'M ONLY THE BARTENDER.
AND...
BUT WHERE AM I?
...A BASEBALL BAT.
CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING ELSE?
YOU'RE MY HERO... EH--
TANDRA.
--TANDRA. A BOR-DAMNED HERO.
IT FEELS LIKE I'VE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING IMPORTANT.
DID YOU THINK YOU COULD GET AWAY WITH IT?
UNRELATED--
I WORK FOR TIPS.
OH, RIGHT.

I'M PRETTY SURE I HAD THIS COMING.
ANYONE ELSE...?
YOU ARE NOT DEAD YET! FIGHT THIS
YES, I KNOW, I KNOW.
BUT JUST ONE MORE DRINK...

THEY TRAVEL NOT THROUGH TIME AND SPACE, BUT THROUGH CONSCIOUSNESS.
A PLACE IN-BETWEEN THAT THE VALKYRIE HAS YET TO UNDERSTAND BUT HAS GROWN TO RESPECT.
SOMETIMES, THE JOURNEY IS LONG, SOMETIMES NOT. BY THE TIME THEY ARRIVE IN THE AFTER, HER CHARGE WILL BE READY.
WHAT WAS THE JOKE YOU TOLD LINDY?
MM?
THE ONE THAT MADE HER PEE A LITTLE?
TO LET GO. PASS OVER.
WELL, WE WERE MAKING DINNER, AND SHE WAS COOKING POTATOES, RIGHT? AND I SAID...
HEY LINDY, DO YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE HOLY WATER?
HOW...?
YOU BOIL THE HELL OUT OF IT!
BUT JANE DOES NOT YET KNOW ALL THE DANGERS LURKING IN BETWEEN THE WORLDS OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.
NOTHING...?
WELL, I GUESS YOU HAD TO BE THERE.

THE HEADLESS CORPSE OF THE CELESTIAL IS IMPOSSIBLY BIG.

IT MAKES NO SOUND, BUT SHE CAN STILL HEAR THEM...

A RESTLESS BUZZ OF VOICES VIBRATING IN HER BONES. ENDLESS AND DESPERATE.

A CACOPHONY OF AGONY.

AND IT OCCURS TO HER, A LITTLE TOO LATE...

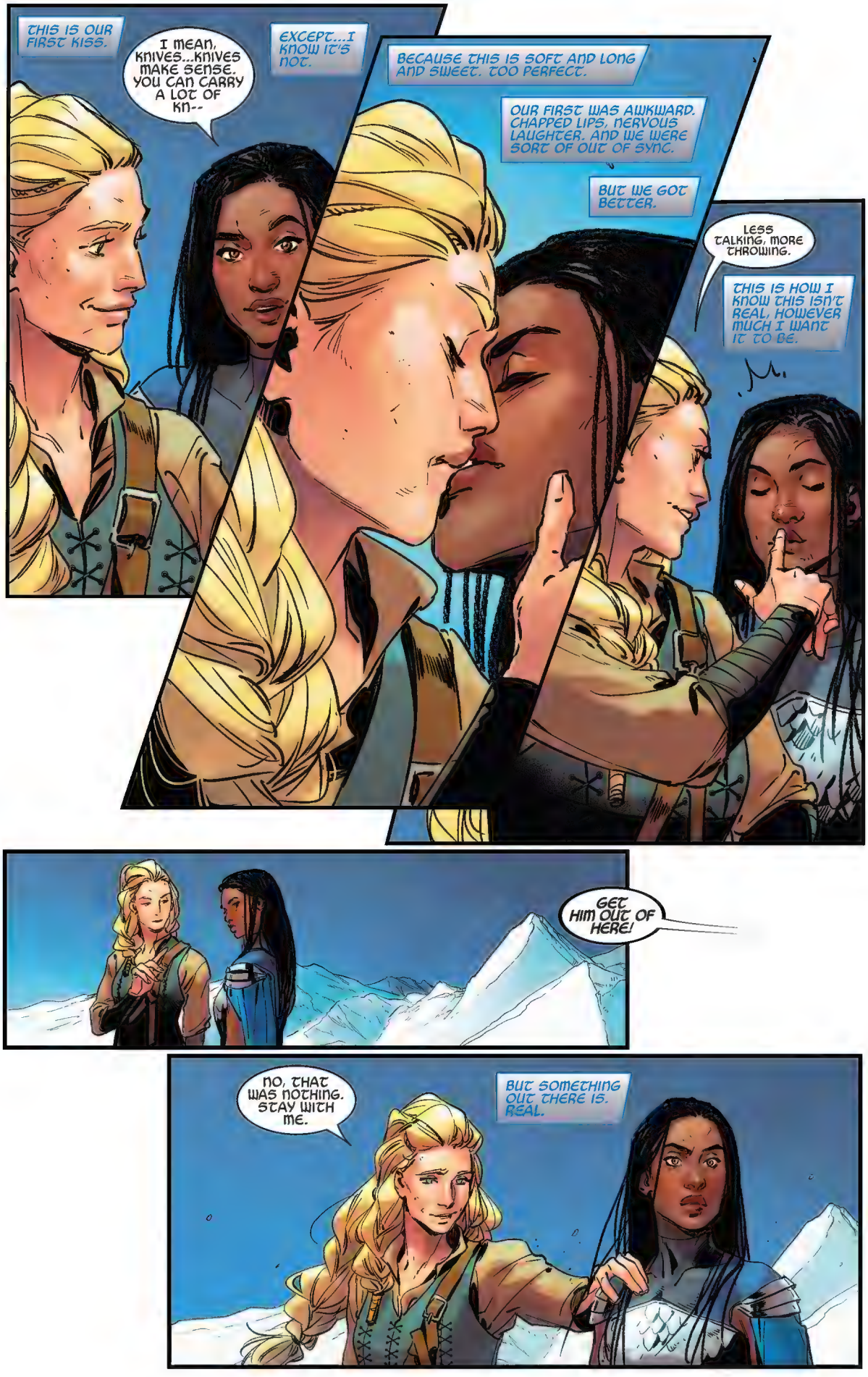
...THAT THIS IS HER FIGHT.

BUT HOW THE HEL DO YOU FIGHT THE DEAD?

THE DRINK IS STILL COOL. THE AIR IS CLEAN. WARM BUT NOT SWELTERING.
THANKS--
NAY! DON'T SAY THAT NAME! I DON'T USE THAT ANYMORE!
AND YOU'RE WELCOME! WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO!
AH!
IT'S ALL WRONG.
THIS IS NOT...
...REAL.
REALITY LEAVES A LOT TO THE IMAGINATION.
"A LOT TO THE IMAGINATION."
THAT DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING.
I FEEL LIKE I'M STUCK IN AN ENDLESS DEJÀ VU.
"WELL, ATTITUDE IS A LITTLE THING THAT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE."
WELL, ATTITUDE IS A LITTLE THING THAT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.
I WANT TO HIT HIM. BUT I KNOW I WON'T, BECAUSE I'M GOING TO GET DISTRACTED. ANY SECOND NOW...
CHURCHILL SAID THAT, YOU KNOW.
NO...NO, HE DIDN'T! DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS?!
ANY SECOND...
CRACK
THERE.
THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS, ONLY CHALLENGES!
KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT, LEONARD.
BATTLE-AX HITTING WOOD.

HOW DO YOU FIGHT THE DEAD? WITH THE FISTS OF A VALKYRIE, IT TURNS OUT.
AND THE OTHERWORLDLY MIGHT OF UNDRJARN, THE ALL-WEAPON.
AS BITS OF THE CREATURE SHATTER, THE BUZZ TURNS TO VOICES.
SHE CAN HEAR THEM, EVERY SINGLE ONE, CLEAR AS DAY.
AND IN HER HEART, SHE KNOWS THEM. SHE CAN SEE THEIR FATES, THEIR LIVES. THEIR DEATHS.

HER NAME WAS ALTA.
YOU SMELL LIKE A BARFIGHT...
CRACK
DAY DRINKING AGAIN?
THE FIRST TIME I SAW HER, SHE THREW MEAD IN ODIN'S FACE.
I'M JUST TRYING TO GIVE YOU A FIGHTING CHANCE.
DO YOUR WORST.
AND SHE HAD THIS LAUGH-- THROATY AND DEEP. DISARMING. REWARDING.
THE THING ABOUT AX THROWING-- IN BATTLE, I MEAN--
--IS THAT IT'S COMPLETELY IMPRACTICAL. WHO IS WALKING AROUND WITH MULTIPLE AXES ON THE BATTLEFIELD?
BUT IT WAS HOW SHE STROLLED BETWEEN GODS AND WARRIORS-- CONFIDENT, CASUAL AND CARELESS-- THAT GOT ME.
DON'T YOU START THAT MUCK WITH ME AGAIN.


THIS IS OUR FIRST KISS.
I MEAN, KNIVES...KNIVES MAKE SENSE. YOU CAN CARRY A LOT OF KN--
EXCEPT...I KNOW IT'S NOT.
BECAUSE THIS IS SOFT AND LONG AND SWEET. TOO PERFECT.
OUR FIRST WAS AWKWARD. CHAPPED LIPS, NERVOUS LAUGHTER. AND WE WERE SORT OF OUT OF SYNC.
BUT WE GOT BETTER.
LESS TALKING, MORE THROWING.
THIS IS HOW I KNOW THIS ISN'T REAL, HOWEVER MUCH I WANT IT TO BE.
GET HIM OUT OF HERE!
NO, THAT WAS NOTHING. STAY WITH ME.
BUT SOMETHING OUT THERE IS. REAL.

NOT WITHOUT YE, LASS!
JUST GO, MR. HORSE! THEY'RE AFTER ROBERT!
THEY WANT THE SENTRY'S SOUL!
WE'RE NOT LEAVING YOU! I WON'T LET BEING DEAD STOP ME FROM FIGHTING!
THESE ARE ALL DEAD SOULS! CORRUPTED BY THE CORPSE OF THE CELESTIAL!
IN OTHER WORDS, ROBERT...

"...THERE ARE SOME FATES EVEN WORSE THAN DEATH!"
I KNOW IT'S NOT REAL.
IT'S NOT HORRIBLE ENOUGH.
THE SMELL OF DEATH IS OVERPOWERING, BUT IT DOESN'T BURN MY NOSTRILS NUMB.
AND THE SCREAMS OF MY FRIENDS PIERCE MY EARS, BUT NOT MY HEART.
I KNOW IT'S NOT REAL.
BUT THERE IS SOMETHING REAL, SOMETHING ALIVE, BACK THERE...IF I CAN ONLY REACH--
HGGHK!
IT'S NOT REAL. IT'S NOT REAL.

RRR!
GAAAARGH! HOW DOES IT HURT THIS MUCH WHEN I'M ALREADY DEAD?!
THE VOICE OF THE SENTRY JOINS THE CHOIR.
AAAAARRRGGGGH!
I'M COMING! KEEP SHOUTING!
THE VALKYRIE CAN STILL HEAR HIM AMONG THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF OTHERS STUCK IN THIS PLACE.

ROBERT!
SHE KNOWS HE IS LOST.
BUT SOMETIMES LOST THINGS CAN BE FOUND...
WELL THIS IS NEW.
...UNLESS YOU LOSE YOURSELF IN THE PROCESS.
ROB--
WAIT, YOU'RE NOT-- DAMMIT, THE HOLE IS CLOSING! HURRY!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT. I'M FREE...
BUT WHOEVER THAT WAS WHO JUST SAVED ME IS STILL IN THERE.
HOLD ON! I'LL TRY TO PULL YOU OUT!
HEY, HORSE OF ASGARD! HELP!
...IF THIS IS ANOTHER VISION, IT'S THE CRUELEST ONE YET.
I WILL HAVE THA KNOW, I'M GOOD VANIR STOCK, ME. NOT LIKE THEM POSH PONIES FROM--
WHATEVER, HORSE, LET'S GO!
HNNGG, I'M HOLDING... ON!
BUT HURRY... PLEASE.
I'LL NOT LEAVE WITHOUT VALKYRIE, LASS...!
I'VE GOT YOUR VALKYRIE. NOW FLY LIKE A VANIR STALLION!

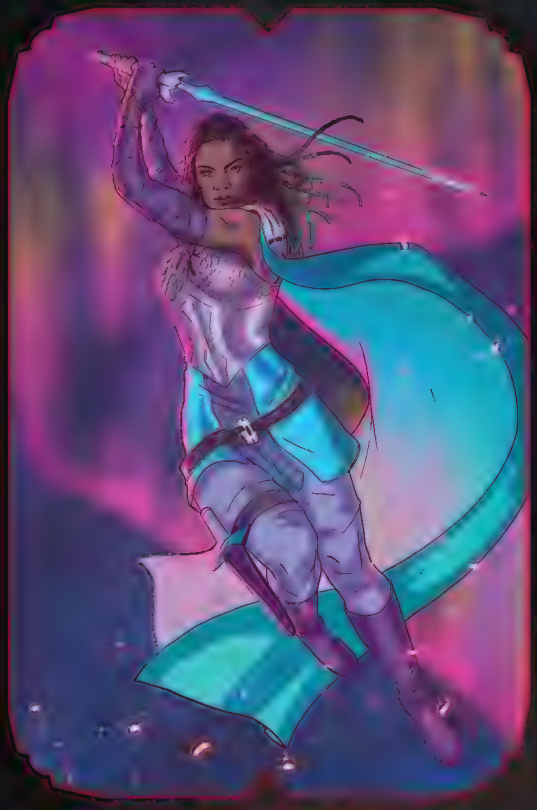
ARGHH!
NOTHING STAYS LOST FOREVER.
GAAAGGH!!!
NOT EVEN THE THINGS THAT WANT TO.
MY FINGERS HURT.
THIS IS WHAT IT FEELS LIKE...
PAIN AND FEAR.
I REMEMBER NOW.
THIS IS REAL.

"VALKYRIE," HUH? SINCE WHEN DO VALKYRIES HAVE WINGS?
SINCE ME! AND WHO THE HEL ARE YOU?
I'M...
I COULD TELL HER I WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL NINE. THAT I RODE FOR BOR AND FOR HIS BOY ODIN. THAT I RAISED A GLASS AT THE FIRST FEAST IN VALHALLA.
BUT INSTEAD, ALL I MANAGE IS...
I'M NO ONE.

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1 VARIANT BY
SKOTTIE YOUNG & **JEAN-FRANÇOIS BEAULIEU**

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1
HIDDEN GEM VARIANT BY
DON PERLIN, **JOE SINNOTT** & **RACHELLE ROSENBERG**

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1
DESIGN VARIANT BY
MATTIA DE IULIS



KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1
BLACK HISTORY MONTH VARIANT BY
ERNANDA SOUZA

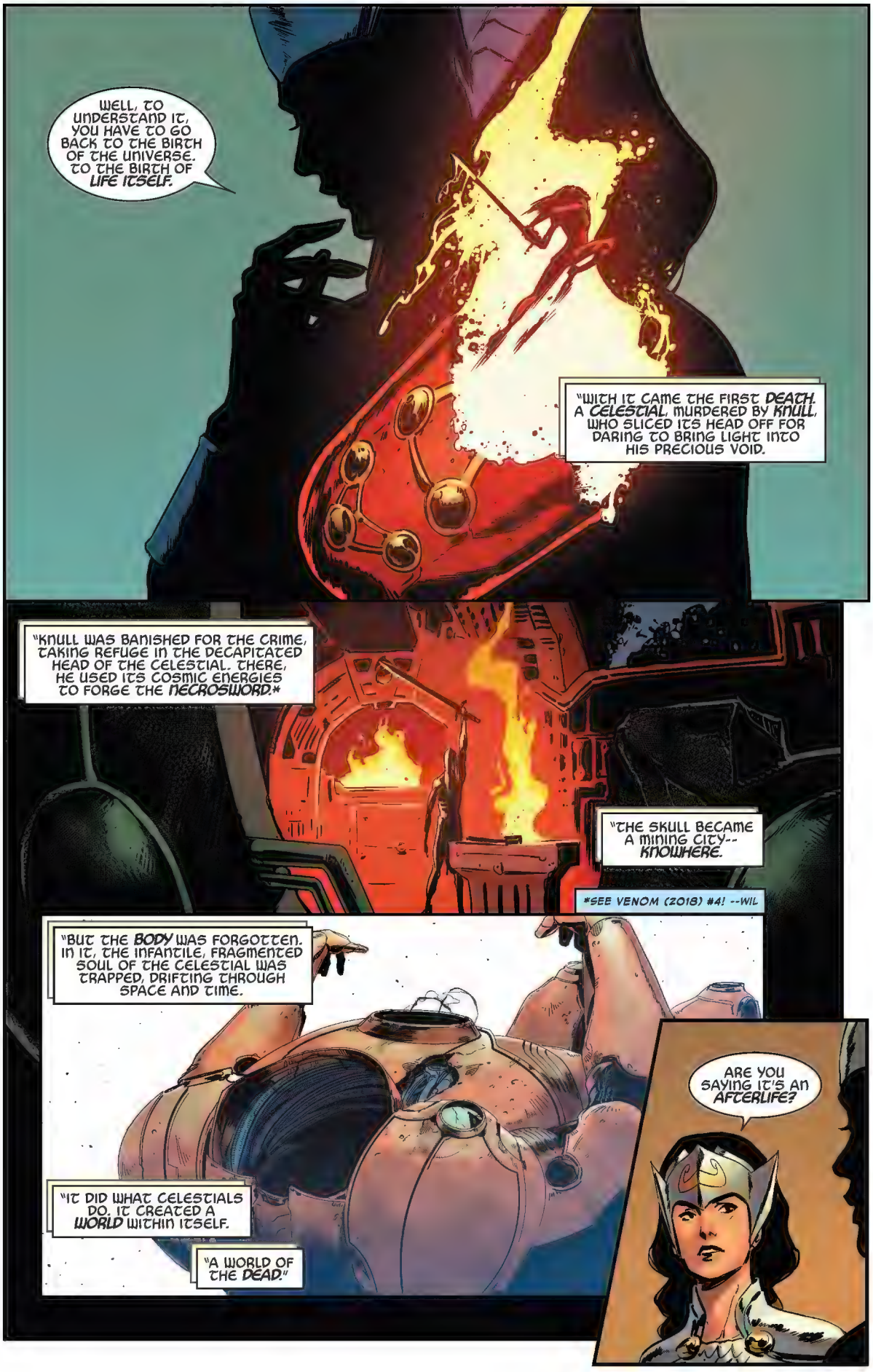
KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #2

NEW YORK.
AHHHHH!!
FEAR IS WHERE YOUR MEMORIES AND IMAGINATION MEET.
IT IS A TELLING THING.
HIS NAME IS SETH.
HIS FIRST FEARS WERE BORN IN THE BASEMENT OF HIS GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE.
SKREEEEEEE
IF I REACH, I CAN SEE THE NIGHT HE SPENT THERE, LOST AND ALONE, LOCKED IN. SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS SO THICK IT WAS HARD TO BREATHE.
UNTIL NOW, HIS NIGHTMARES HAVE BEEN OF CONFINED SPACES AND COLD, STILL AIR.
OF SCREAMING WITHOUT SOUND, WITHOUT BEING HEARD.
AND SPIDERS. SO MANY SPIDERS.
THAT WAS BEFORE KNULL.

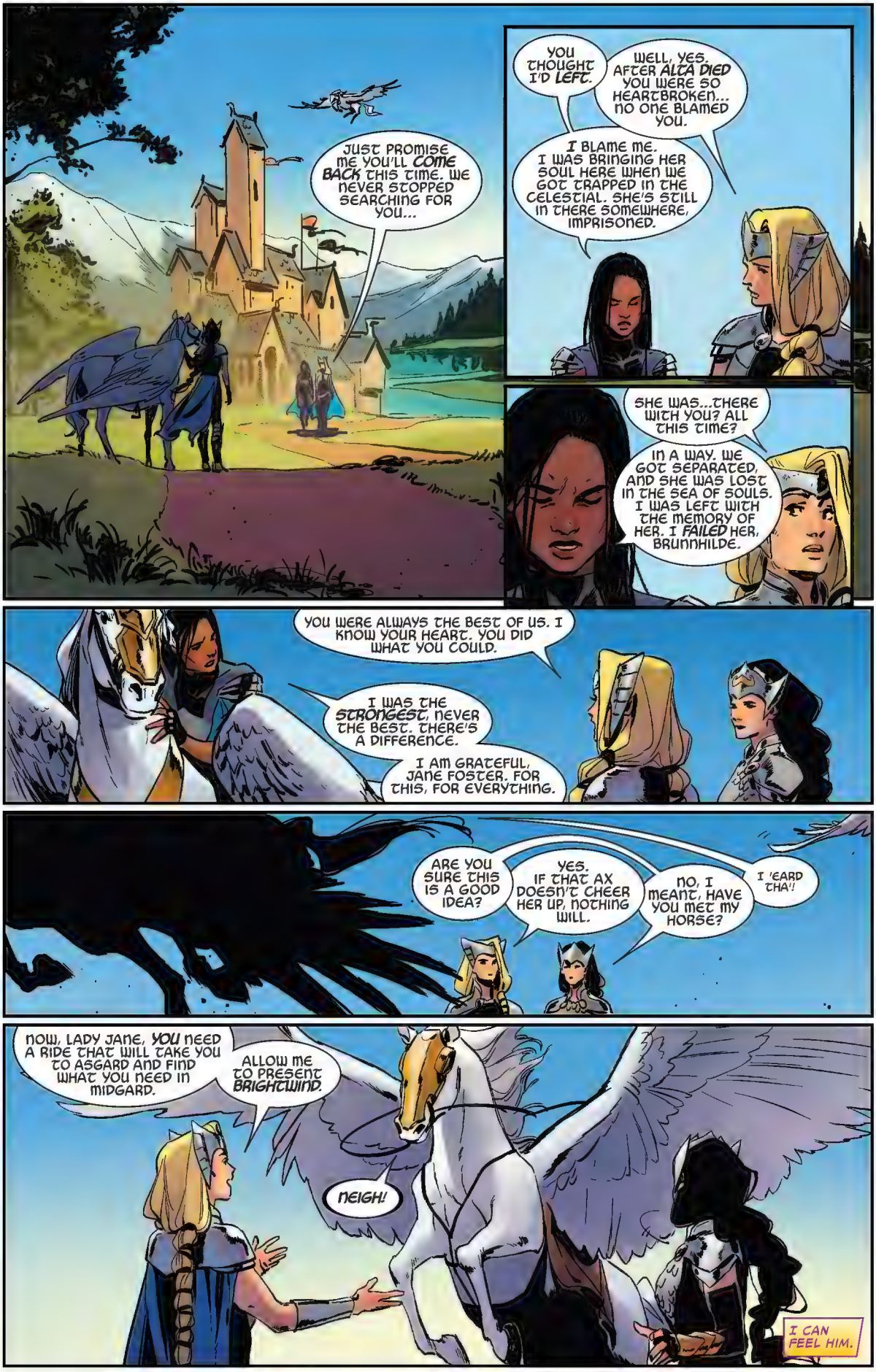
I CAN FEEL HIS FEARS CHANGE IN REAL-TIME.
I'M DANI MOONSTAR.
OH GOD, THANK YOU!
I'M A MUTANT. HATED AND FEARED. I HAVE SEEN WHAT HORRORS LURK IN THE MINDS OF MEN. THE TRAUMAS AND HIDDEN WOUNDS THAT CAN BE MORE CRIPPLING THAN BULLETS.
GET TO THE STATION! I WILL HOLD THEM OFF AS LONG AS I CAN.
I KNOW THAT THE PEOPLE WHO ONLY SEE SPIDERS IN THEIR NIGHTMARES ARE THE LUCKY ONES.
AND THAT I'M IN A CITY ALL OUT OF LUCK.

ONE OF THE REASONS HUMANS FEAR SNAKES IS THAT WE CAN'T PREDICT THEIR MOVEMENTS.
WHICH MIGHT EXPLAIN WHY I'M THIS SCARED.
Caf
I DON'T KNOW THESE CREATURES. I FEEL MY SPEAR HIT, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO HURT THEM.
I TRY TO REACH THEM, BUT I ONLY SEE A COLLECTIVE. ENDLESS MINDS CONNECTED AS ONE. I CAN'T TELL WHAT THEY WANT OR WHAT THEY FEAR.
BUT WHATEVER IT IS...
IT'S HERE.

VALHALLA.
"IT'S A GAME WE USED TO PLAY.
"AN OLD VALKYRIE PASTIME, GREAT PRACTICE FOR BOTH HORSES AND WOMEN."
ARE THOSE... HEADS?
YES. MOSTLY TROLL HEADS. TROLLS AND TRAITORS.
BRUNNHILDE...
LOOK AT HER, JANE. SHE WANTS TO JOIN THEM. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, RIGHT?
YES. BUT... I DON'T SEE HOW I CAN DO THIS WITHOUT HER.
YOU TELL HER MIDGARD IS DYING. YOU TELL HER SHE NEEDS TO FIGHT. BUT SHE'S BEEN IMPRISONED FOR CENTURIES, SURROUNDED BY DEATH. NOW SHE FINDS ALL HER FRIENDS DEAD.
YOU HAVE TO LET HER REMEMBER LIFE BEFORE YOU CAN EXPECT HER TO FIGHT FOR IT.
THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO? THE HEADLESS CELESTIAL GOT SENTRY AND COUNTLESS OTHERS. BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT REALLY IS, LET ALONE HOW TO FIGHT IT.


WELL, TO UNDERSTAND IT, YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE BIRTH OF THE UNIVERSE. TO THE BIRTH OF LIFE ITSELF.
"WITH IT CAME THE FIRST DEATH. A CELESTIAL, MURDERED BY KNULL, WHO SLICED ITS HEAD OFF FOR DARING TO BRING LIGHT INTO HIS PRECIOUS VOID.
"KNULL WAS BANISHED FOR THE CRIME, TAKING REFUGE IN THE DECAPITATED HEAD OF THE CELESTIAL. THERE, HE USED ITS COSMIC ENERGIES TO FORGE THE NECROSWORD.*
"THE SKULL BECAME A MINING CITY-- KNOWHERE.
*SEE VENOM (2018) #4! --WIL
"BUT THE BODY WAS FORGOTTEN. IN IT, THE INFANTILE, FRAGMENTED SOUL OF THE CELESTIAL WAS TRAPPED, DRIFTING THROUGH SPACE AND TIME.
"IT DID WHAT CELESTIALS DO. IT CREATED A WORLD WITHIN ITSELF.
"A WORLD OF THE DEAD."
ARE YOU SAYING IT'S AN AFTERLIFE?

IN A WAY.
IT'S A PRISON. IT DOES NOT BELONG TO ANY PANTHEON. IT'S A SPIRITUALLY BANKRUPT THING, A BOR-DAMNED PARASITE.
YES, BUT IT'S BOUND TO THE NECROSWORD AND, BY EXTENSION, TO KNULL.
"IT STAYS IN THE IN-BETWEEN, NEVER FAR FROM THE SWORD THAT SHARES ITS ESSENCE.
"IT FEEDS ENERGY TO THE NECROSWORD, AND IN RETURN, IT FEASTS ON THE DEAD SOULS LEFT IN THE WAKE OF THE SYMBIOTE GOD.
"GOD" INDEED. KNULL IS NOT A GOD. WHO PRAYS TO HIM? WHO WORSHIPS HIM BUT THE CREATURES HE SPAWNS HIMSELF?
SELF-ABSORBED, SINGLE-MINDED, UTTERLY INSUFFERABLE... SOUNDS LIKE A GOD TO ME.
I LIKE YOU.
TWO BATTLES ARE BEING FOUGHT RIGHT NOW--ONE IN LIFE AND ONE IN THE AFTER. NEITHER CAN BE WON WITH THE CONNECTION INTACT. YOU MUST SEVER IT.
IT CAN'T BE DONE.
IT CAN BE DONE. I HAVE A PLAN.
BUT FIRST, OLD FRIEND, I THINK YOU SHOULD GO AND GET YOUR AX BACK.
MY AX? YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS?!


JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL COME BACK THIS TIME. WE NEVER STOPPED SEARCHING FOR YOU...
YOU THOUGHT I'D LEFT.
WELL, YES. AFTER ALTA DIED YOU WERE SO HEARTBROKEN... NO ONE BLAMED YOU.
I BLAME ME. I WAS BRINGING HER SOUL HERE WHEN WE GOT TRAPPED IN THE CELESTIAL. SHE'S STILL IN THERE SOMEWHERE, IMPRISONED.
SHE WAS...THERE WITH YOU? ALL THIS TIME?
IN A WAY. WE GOT SEPARATED, AND SHE WAS LOST IN THE SEA OF SOULS. I WAS LEFT WITH THE MEMORY OF HER. I FAILED HER, BRUNNHILDE.
YOU WERE ALWAYS THE BEST OF US. I KNOW YOUR HEART. YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD.
I WAS THE STRONGEST, NEVER THE BEST. THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.
I AM GRATEFUL, JANE FOSTER. FOR THIS, FOR EVERYTHING.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A GOOD IDEA?
YES. IF THAT AX DOESN'T CHEER HER UP, NOTHING WILL.
NO, I MEANT, HAVE YOU MET MY HORSE?
I 'EARD THA'!
NOW, LADY JANE, YOU NEED A RIDE THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO ASGARD AND FIND WHAT YOU NEED IN MIDGARD.
ALLOW ME TO PRESENT BRIGHTWIND.
NEIGH!
I CAN FEEL HIM.

THROUGH THE HIVE OF MINDS THAT BINDS THESE CREATURES.
THE GOD.
YOU ARE IN MY MIND. WHAT DO YOU ZZEEK, LITTLE LIFE?
I FIND NO FEARS, BUT I CAN SEE HIS DESIRES.
KNULL! ARE YOU THERE?
THE ABYSS. THE ABSENCE OF LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL, SEEN THROUGH HIS EYES.
I AM.
I AM EVERYWHERE.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
THIS GAMBIT. THIS DIZZTRACTION. YOU ARE STALLING. IT WILL NOT WORK. I CAN HEAR THE PEOPLE FLEEING.
THEY CANNOT OUTRUN ME.
I CAN HEAR THEIR LITTLE HEARTZZ BEATING FAST.
BUT THROUGH THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER, DESIRES ALWAYS ARE.
BEAUTIFUL.

THE RHYTHM IN THE BACK OF DANI'S MIND ECHOES IN EVERY CREAK ON THE BLOCK.
HER PSIONIC ABILITIES CONNECT HER NOT ONLY TO THE SYMBIOTE GOD, BUT SMALLER LIFE-FORMS AS WELL.
WHAT ABOUT NOW? CAN YOU STILL HEAR THEM?
TAP TAP RATTA TAP
THE DRUMMING IS DEAFENING. THE SOUND IS ALL AROUND THEM, DROWNING OUT EVERYTHING ELSE.
TAP RATTA TAP TAP RATTA TAP TAP
TAP TAP RATTA TAP
SQEEE
YOU WANT TO END LIFE. BUT YOU UNDERESTIMATE IT.
YOU FORGET THAT LIFE IS NOT ALL BRIGHT. LIFE IS A SPECTRUM.
YOU FORGET OUR HUNGER. OUR ANGER. OUR WILL. YOU CAN'T JUST TURN OUT THE LIGHT. WE SURVIVE IN THE DARKNESS TOO.
AND FOR ONE BEAUTIFUL MOMENT, IT FEELS LIKE THE WORLD IS FIGHTING BACK.
ENOUGH.
UNH!
THE MOMENT IS FLEETING.

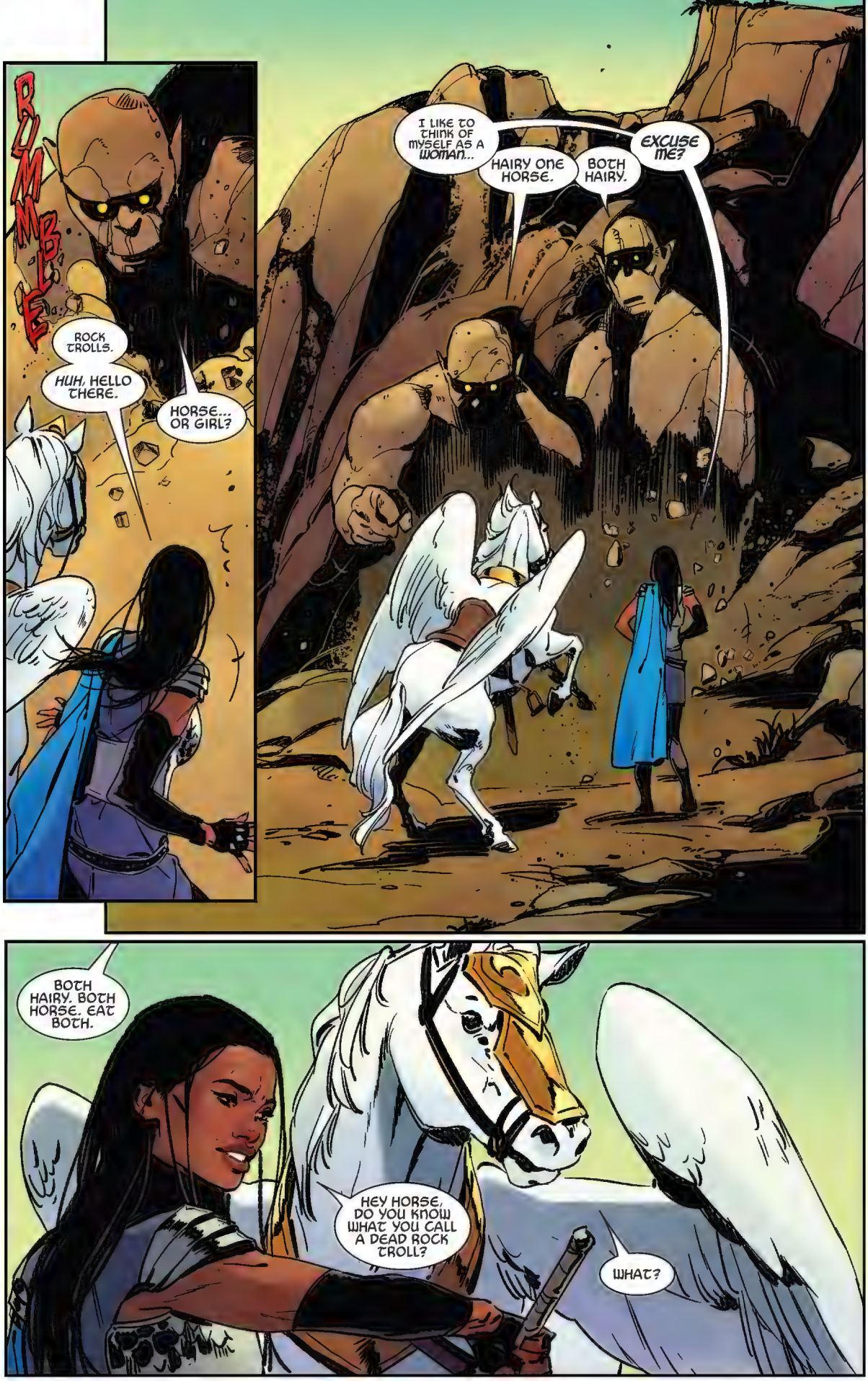
ASGARD.
AS GUARDIAN OF THE BIFROST, SIF SEES EVERYTHING.
THE BATTLE OF MIDGARD. THE LOSS OF HER FRIENDS.
'TIS A GRIM DAY TO BE ALL-SEEING.
YOU FOUND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR IN THE ASGARDIAN ARMORY.
(IT IS NOT A QUESTION.)
AND NOW YOU SEEK HILDEGARDE.
YOU ARE HERE TO ASK HER TO JOIN A BATTLE THAT MUST BE FOUGHT BUT WILL NOT BE WON. IT WEIGHS ON YOU, JANE FOSTER.
HEAVILY, SIF.
BUT HILDEGARDE IS NOT HERE.
A WAR OF HEROES AND GODS, UNSPEAKABLE MONSTERS, SLIM CHANCE OF SURVIVAL...
OF COURSE. SHE'S ALREADY THERE.
AYE, IT IS VERY MUCH HER THING.
I WILL SEND HILDEGARDE WORD THAT YOU'RE COMING.
BUT IN SIF'S HEART, THERE IS HOPE. BECAUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TOO LONG...
...THE VALKYRIES RIDE AGAIN.

VANAHEIM.
IT IS HARD TO SURPRISE THE VANIR.
THE FUTURE IS EVERYWHERE IN THEIR REALM.
T' FORT OF GAARDAR.
THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND THIS VANLANDI, KING OF THIEVES?
AYE, LASS.
IN THE FLOW OF THE RIVER, IN THE WHISPER OF THE WIND.
LET'S WALK, OKAY? I WANT TO FEEL THE GROUND BENEATH MY FEET.
THIS IS THE FIRST REAL THING I'VE TOUCHED IN CENTURIES.
DO YOU KNOW HOW I CAN TELL THIS PLACE IS REAL?
IT CAN EVEN BE FOUND IN A GLASS OF FINE ULLEN ALE IF YOU KNOW HOW TO LOOK.
NOT EVEN AN ALL-KNOWING, ANCIENT CELESTIAL BENT ON TORTURING MILLIONS OF SOULS COULD COME UP WITH THIS SMELL.
WHICH MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT THEY HAVE BEEN EXPECTING HER.

VANLANDI FIRST SAW HER COMING IN THE INNARDS OF A GOAT.
SHE CAME DOWN ON A FLYING HORSE?
THEN SHE STARTED HAUNTING HIS DREAMS.
BLACK OF HAIR, QUICK OF FLIGHT. JUST LIKE IN YOUR VISIONS.
HE HAS SEEN WHAT SHE IS AFTER...AND WHAT SHE WILL DO WHEN HE REFUSES HER.
THE STEEL IS FORGED BY DWARVES, CHARMED BY WITCHES AND BLESSED BY THE BLOOD OF GODS.
SHE HAS COME FOR...MY RECENT ACQUISITION.
HE ALSO KNOWS ITS VALUE.
DIDN'T TAKE HER LONG. ASGARDIAN STEEL IS NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.
I ALREADY HAVE A BUYER WILLING TO PAY YOUR WEIGHT IN GOLD FOR THIS OLD WEAPON. I AM NOT YIELDING IT TO ONE LITTLE GIRL BECAUSE OF SOME NIGHTMARES.
GATHER EVERYONE, PROTECT THE CASTLE AT ALL COSTS.
HORSE STEAK FOR DINNER?
YRUMM!
AND IT IS IN THE NATURE OF THE LIVING TO FIGHT THE INEVITABLE. TO THINK ONE COULD TRICK GODS AND OUTSMART FATE.

BECAUSE SOMETIMES YOU CAN. THAT IS WHAT THE BEST STORIES TEACH YOU.
AND YOU'RE SAYING YOU WERE THERE?
AYE.
YOU SAW IT HAPPEN?
AYE.
I'VE HEARD THIS STORY MANY TIMES BEFORE--
--CAPTURED BY TROLLS, ABOUT TO BE KILLED AND EATEN--NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.
BUT THE TROLLS ARGUE, TIME PASSES, THE SUN RISES AND THE TROLLS TURN TO STONE.

AYE.
THING IS--IT IS STATISTICALLY UNLIKELY THAT IT HAS HAPPENED TO THIS MANY PEOPLE.
OH, I DUNNO. LOTS OF STONE AROUND.
WELL, THAT'S TRUE...
RUMBLE


RUMBLE
ROCK TROLLS.
HUH, HELLO THERE.
HORSE... OR GIRL?
I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A WOMAN...
HAIRY ONE HORSE.
BOTH HAIRY.
EXCUSE ME?
BOTH HAIRY. BOTH HORSE. EAT BOTH.
HEY HORSE, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU CALL A DEAD ROCK TROLL?
WHAT?

GRAVEL.
SHUNK
NO FUNNY.
WELL, IT'S A LITTLE FUNNY. A PEBBLE OF A JOKE, IF YOU WILL.
SLICE
LASS.
LASS, TWELVE O' CLOCK.
HEY! MOTHER...
WHOOSH
...FORKLORE!

NO MORE TRICKZZ?

IT'S LIKE FIGHTING AN ANGRY OCEAN.

NO MORE INSULTZ?

MY ARROWS HIT, BUT FIZZLE AND DIE IN THE WAVES. THEY LEAVE NEITHER TRACE NOR WOUND.

YOU DON'T SEE THAT YOU ARE MUCH LIKE US.

WHAT IS MORE HUMAN THAN TO DESTROY *THE OTHER? THE UNKNOWN?*

WHAT A SORRY EXCUSE FOR A UNIVERSE THIS IS, IF YOU ARE A GOD.

MY SPEAR CUTS DEEP BUT DOES NO DAMAGE. NEITHER DO MY WORDS.

I FEEL HIM LEAVE. THE GOD IS GONE, HIS FOCUS ELSEWHERE.

HNH!

BUT THE MONSTER REMAINS.

I'M SORRY, WAS THAT YOUR... UNCLE?
HE HAS SEEN HIMSELF SAY THESE WORDS MANY TIMES.
SHIELD MAIDEN! I WARN YOU... LEAVE THIS PLACE.
THEY COME OUT STILTED AND CLUMSY, JUST LIKE HE KNEW THEY WOULD.
YOU ARE VANLANDI? KING OF SCOUNDRELS? LEADER OF THESE... MERRY MEN?
YOU HAVE SOMETHING OF MINE.
IF IT WERE YOURS, IT WOULD BE IN YOUR HANDS, NOT MINE.
LOOK, I RAN OUT OF MORAL HIGH GROUND A LONG TIME AGO. I DON'T CARE WHERE OR HOW YOU GOT IT.
BUT JARNBJORN IS MY AX.
THE SMELLY, GRUMPY DWARVES OF NIDAVELLIR FORGED IT FOR ME, AND I WILL HAVE IT BACK.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU COME AND CLAIM IT?
I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER ASK.

COULD IT BE...
BRIGHTWIND...?
IT'S YOU. I KNEW YOU WOULD BE THE ONE TO COME FOR ME AT THE END.
YOU'RE NOT QUITE AT THE END YET, DANI MOONSTAR...
JANE FOSTER. A VALKYRIE, AS I ONCE WAS.
HER FEARS ARE DEEP AND COMPLEX. THEY ARE NOT OF PAIN OR DEATH.
THERE YOU ARE.
AT LEAST NOT HER OWN.
...THOUGH, WE MIGHT ADMITTEDLY BE VERY CLOSE.

VALKYRIE! YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ME?
HILDEGARDE!
SCREEE
JANE'S DESIRES ARE LESS COMPLEX.
AND RIGHT NOW, THEY MIRROR MY OWN.
YES--BUT LET'S DO THIS FIRST, SHALL WE?
SHE WANTS TO FIGHT. TO SCREAM. TO UNDERSTAND THIS BATTLE.
LET'S--
--FINISH THE WEE BASTARD.
BUT MOST OF ALL, SHE WANTS TO WIN.

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #3

IT FEELS LIKE HE IS HOLDING HIS BREATH.
WHO ARE YOU?
ROBERT REYNOLDS.
AND IF HE EXHALES, HE WILL GIVE HIS CAPTOR WHAT IT WANTS.
NO.
WHICH IS EVERYTHING HE IS.
AND WAS.
AND COULD BE.
WHO ARE YOU?
I... AM...
NO. WE ARE.
SO HE KEEPS HOLDING ON.
EVEN THOUGH HE KNOWS THAT THERE IS NO AIR.
NO TIME.
AND NO OTHER WAY.

"WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I HAD THIS COMBAT TRAINER. MATTIS.
WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS?
WELL, YOUNG HILDEGARDE. YOU'VE BEATEN EVERY SWORDSMAN, CHAMPION, GLADIATOR, FOILIST AND WARRIOR THIS LAND HAS TO OFFER.
YOU HAVE BEATEN ME, YOUR MASTER, MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT.
THEN LET ME FIGHT THE GODS!
I'M SURE YOU WILL, IN DUE COURSE. BUT THERE ARE OTHER LESSONS TO LEARN.
"HE ONCE LEFT ME IN A CAVE GUARDED BY A GRUMPY DRAGON--SOME SORT OF CRASH COURSE IN HUMILITY... OR THE FOOD CHAIN.
"I MIGHT HAVE MISSED THE FINER POINTS.
SO YOU WANT ME TO FIGHT A DRAGON? IT SPEWS FIRE AT EVERYTHING THAT MOVES!
YOU NEED TO LEARN TO PICK YOUR BATTLES, HILDEGARDE.
I'M READY, HEIMDALL.
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OUT. YOU DO NOT NEED TO FIGHT IT--YOU ONLY NEED TO PASS IT.
AND IF IT ATTACKS EVERYTHING, BECOME NOTHING.
"HE HAD THESE DRAGON RULES--THE THREE T'S."

NEW YORK.
THE THREE T'S?
TEETH, TAIL, AND TOES.
TOES?
WELL, CLAWS, I SUPPOSE.
VALKYRIE! THERE'S A WEAK SPOT BENEATH ITS JAW!
GOT IT!
MANY A DRAGON LATER, I'VE LEARNED THE HARD WAY--
SLASH

"--IT'S A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED THAN THAT."
SKREE
SLICE
ONE DOWN, MILLIONS TO GO. THIS IS NOT SUSTAINABLE.
AGREED, DANI MOONSTAR. VALKYRIE, YOU NEEDED HELP WITH SOMETHING? PLEASE TELL ME YOU HAVE SOME KIND OF PLAN.
I DO.
WELL--IT'S BRUNNHILDE'S PLAN.
BRUNNHILDE? *OUR* BRÜNNI...? HOW?

VANAHEIM.
IT WAS BRUTAL.
ARGHHH!!!
THERE WAS A SLIVER OF HOPE IN VANLANDI'S HEART WHEN HER SWORD BROKE ON A PARTICULARLY STURDY GRAPHITE TROLL.
BUT IT WAS SOON CRUSHED.
WHUMP
JUST LIKE BURT'S SKULL.
OH NOES.

AND VANLANDI'S DREAMS.
:SIGH:
HELLO, JARNBJORN, MY OLD FRIEND.
EVERYTHING HURTS. THE ACHE OF A FIGHT WELL FOUGHT--I'VE MISSED IT.
I FEEL INVINCIBLE. LIKE I COULD TAKE ON ANYTHING, ANYONE.
ANYTHING...
ANYTHING BUT WHAT BRUNNHILDE IS ASKING.
IT'S A FIGHT LIKE ANY OTHER.
NO, IT'S NOT. YOU WEREN'T TRAPPED INSIDE A DEAD CELESTIAL FOR CENTURIES.
IT WAS LIKE LIVING IN A DREAM OF THE PAST.
AAAAATTTAAAACK!
I WOULD WAKE UP IN A PLACE HALF-FAMILIAR, SOMEWHERE PLUCKED FROM MY MEMORIES...

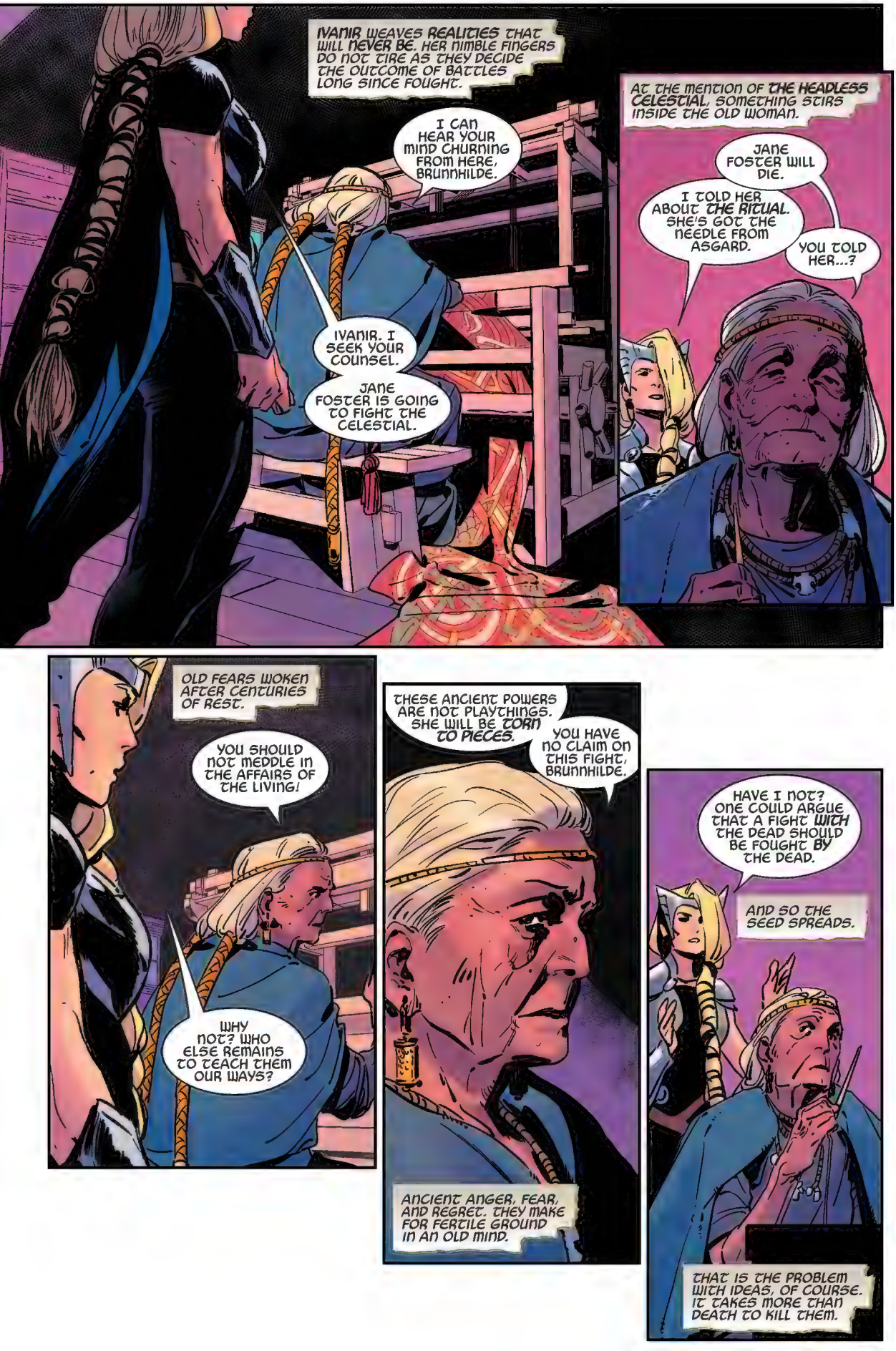
...AND IT WOULD REPEAT. AGAIN AND AGAIN.
AND YOU KNOW THE WORST PART?
IT WAS COMFORTING. TURNS OUT, YOU GET USED TO LIVING IN DREAMS.
BEHIND THA.
AAAATTAAACK!
THE LACK OF RISK. ENDLESS DO-OVERS. NO TRUE SURPRISES.
EVEN A FAMILIAR NIGHTMARE CAN BE LESS FRIGHTENING THAN THE UNKNOWN.
CLANG
I USED TO LEAVE MYSELF MESSAGES--NOTES, WRITTEN IN SAND OR CARVED INTO WOOD.
LITTLE PROMISES TO FIGHT, TO FLEE, IN THE HOPES THAT MY FUTURE SELF WOULD BE BETTER OR STRONGER.
A THOUSAND RESOLUTIONS NEVER KEPT.
AND I'M SCARED...THAT IF I GO BACK THERE, I'LL GIVE IN TO IT. THAT I'LL FIND OUT THAT'S WHO I TRULY AM.
A COWARD.

SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS...
...TWO OF US MUST STEP INTO THE SPACE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH, PERFORM AN ANCIENT RITUAL AND THEN BATTLE THE DEAD, WHILE THE THIRD...
...MUST HEAD IN THERE TO FIND KNULL AND THE NECROSWORD, PREFERABLY BEFORE HER INEVITABLE DEATH.
YES, WELL...WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT...
BUT WE MUST SEVER THAT CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CELESTIAL AND THE NECROSWORD.
RIGHT-O. I WILL FIND THE NECROSWORD IF YOU DON'T MIND. I PREFER MY FEET FIRMLY PLANTED IN THE WORLD OF FLESH AND BEER.
IF YOU'RE SURE, HILDEGARDE.
I WILL GO WHERE I AM NEEDED, BUT I NO LONGER HAVE VALKYRIE POWERS. HOW WILL I GET THERE?
BRIGHTWIND WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THE VEIL...
AND...THERE IS NO TIME IN BETWEEN THE WORLDS. YOU WILL BE ALL THAT YOU ONCE WERE OR EVER WILL BE.
JANE FOSTER REPEATS THE WORDS SAID BY BRUNNHILDE, THOUGH SHE DOES NOT ENTIRELY GRASP THEIR MEANING.
...I THINK THAT MEANS YOU'LL HAVE YOUR POWERS.
LET'S HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT.
HAVING BRIGHTWIND BACK IS A GOOD START.
NEIGH

THIS BATTLE...
IF WE COULD BUT CONVINCE KNULL, THE HIVE WOULD FOLLOW.
IF WE COULD MAKE KNULL UNDERSTAND THE VALUE OF OUR LIVES-- ONE *SINGLE MIND* CHANGED, AND ALL THIS DEATH WOULD END.
BUT IT'S THE PRIVILEGE OF THE *STRONG* TO BE *IGNORANT*. IGNORANT AND HARD OF HEARING.
AND AS HE WON'T LISTEN, TO EITHER OUR REASONING OR OUR SCREAMS...
WHAT CAN WE DO BUT *FIGHT?*
YET IT IS A WASTEFUL BATTLE.
YES. AT LEAST WE FIGHT IT TOGETHER.
AYE. DO YOU THINK YOU CAN DRAW THE BEASTIE OFF FOR ME?

OF COURSE! GOOD LUCK, HILDEGARDE!
GOOD LUCK TO US ALL, VALKYRIES.
SKREE
SKREEEEEEE
HEH. ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A VALKYRIE...

VALHALLA.
LIKE IN LIFE, SO IN DEATH.
THEY SPEND THEIR DAYS TRAINING FOR A WAR THAT WILL NEVER COME.
AT NIGHT THEY FEAST AND DRINK LIKE IT IS THE EVE BEFORE A BATTLE.
DEAD VALKYRIES DO NOT TIRE. THERE IS JOY. CONTENTMENT. THE UTTER PEACE KNOWN ONLY TO THE UNLIVING.
IN ALL BUT ONE.
BRUNNHILDE FEELS DISTRACTED. A SEED OF INSPIRATION, AN IDEA, IS GROWING IN HER MIND.
BUT THE AFTERLIFE IS NOT A PLACE FOR GROWTH.
EVEN OF IDEAS.


IVANIR WEAVES REALITIES THAT WILL NEVER BE. HER NIMBLE FINGERS DO NOT TIRE AS THEY DECIDE THE OUTCOME OF BATTLES LONG SINCE FOUGHT.
I CAN HEAR YOUR MIND CHURNING FROM HERE, BRUNNHILDE.
IVANIR. I SEEK YOUR COUNSEL.
JANE FOSTER IS GOING TO FIGHT THE CELESTIAL.
AT THE MENTION OF THE HEADLESS CELESTIAL, SOMETHING STIRS INSIDE THE OLD WOMAN.
JANE FOSTER WILL DIE.
I TOLD HER ABOUT THE RITUAL. SHE'S GOT THE NEEDLE FROM ASGARD.
YOU TOLD HER...?
OLD FEARS WOKEN AFTER CENTURIES OF REST.
YOU SHOULD NOT MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE LIVING!
WHY NOT? WHO ELSE REMAINS TO TEACH THEM OUR WAYS?
THESE ANCIENT POWERS ARE NOT PLAYTHINGS. SHE WILL BE TORN TO PIECES.
YOU HAVE NO CLAIM ON THIS FIGHT, BRUNNHILDE.
ANCIENT ANGER, FEAR, AND REGRET. THEY MAKE FOR FERTILE GROUND IN AN OLD MIND.
HAVE I NOT? ONE COULD ARGUE THAT A FIGHT WITH THE DEAD SHOULD BE FOUGHT BY THE DEAD.
AND SO THE SEED SPREADS.
THAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH IDEAS, OF COURSE. IT TAKES MORE THAN DEATH TO KILL THEM.

THE RITUAL COMES AT A PRICE. THEY DO NOT KNOW EXACTLY WHAT.
WELL, HELLO THERE, VALKYRIE.
BUT WHATEVER IT IS, THEY ARE READY TO PAY.
LET'S BEGIN.
THE NEEDLE PIERCES THE FABRIC OF REALITY.
IT WEAVES THROUGH DIMENSIONS AND RIPS DEEP CUTS IN TIME AND SPACE.
CAN YOU FEEL THAT?
YES. AND SO WILL KNULL.
DO YOU THINK HILDEGARDE IS READY?
THROW. SHE WILL BE THERE.
WHEN THE NEEDLE DISAPPEARS FROM SIGHT, THE VALKYRIES CAN STILL FEEL IT.
IN THEIR BONES, IN THEIR HEARTS, IN THE TIPS OF THEIR FINGERS.

MATTIS TAUGHT ME: BE NOTHING.
THAT'S HOW YOU RIDE A DRAGON.
IT IS A BLESSING TO HAVE A PURPOSE HERE IN THE CITY WHERE ALL HOPE FAILS.
TO HAVE SOMETHING TO DO.

TO KNOW THAT IF I CAN ONLY MAKE IT FAR ENOUGH IN, IF I CAN ONLY FIND KNULL, MY LIFE MIGHT MEAN SOMETHING IN THE END.
IF I CHOOSE MY BATTLES WISELY, I JUST MIGHT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
IT IS NOT A PLACE LACKING IN GLORIOUS DEATHS, AFTER ALL.
LOOK OUT!
BUT MINE IS NOT HERE. NOT YET.

WE SHOULD BE GETTING BACK. VALKYRIE'S LIABLE TO GET INTO TROUBLE WITHOUT ME AROUND.
LET ME ENJOY THE MOMENT. FEELS LIKE I'M AWAKE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CENTURIES!
YOU KNOW, THE DEAD USED TO TELL ME THINGS.
IN THERE, IN THE CELESTIAL. WHISPERS AND RUMORS FROM THE LIVES THEY'D LIVED.
AND I HEARD A RUMOR THAT THE LOUDEST AND BLONDEST SON OF ODIN...YOU KNOW...
THUNDER-LAD.
AYE, THAT'S THE ONE.
...A RUMOR THAT HE USED JARNBJORN IN MY ABSENCE. AND THAT HE BLESSED IT WITH HIS OWN BLOOD.
AND NOW IT CAN PIERCE THE ARMOR OF *THE CELESTIALS*.
AND I THOUGHT MAYBE...
...MAYBE IF I HAD THIS *ONE THING* BACK. A SECRET WEAPON...
...IT WOULD STRENGTHEN MY RESOLVE, YOU KNOW?

ONLY SMALL MEN LOOK F' COURAGE IN BIG WEAPONS, LASS.
WELL, IF WEAPONS DO NOT WORK, THERE'S ALWAYS DRINK. I'VE HEARD IT'S EXCELLENT FOR COURAGE.
DID THA KNOW I WERE BORN 'ERE?
THAT YOU'RE OF VANIR STOCK? NOT ONE OF THOSE POSH PONIES FROM THAT ASGARD? YEAH, IT HAS COME UP ONCE OR TWI--
T' ALL-WEAPON SIGNAL.
WE'RE IN VANAHEIM, LASS--A PLACE OF DIVINATION. IF THA WANT FOR RESOLVE, LOOK AT T' BOTTOM OF THY ALE.
TO SEE WHAT? THE FUTURE IN THE BOTTOM OF A GLASS OF ALE?
WELL... THERE'S NOTHING HERE.
NOTHING.
ONLY BLACK.
AYE.

I CHOSE POORLY.
THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF BATTLES: THE ONE WITH AN EXIT STRATEGY AND THE OTHER KIND.
IT'S HERE!
THIS IS THE OTHER KIND.

I KNOW BECAUSE I'M NOT SCARED.
MATTIS SAID THERE WOULD COME A TIME WHEN I KNEW THE FIGHT WAS OVER.
WHEN I'D KNOW THAT I HAD DONE ALL I COULD. AND THAT I'D FEEL NOTHING BUT JOY.

GAHH!
AND I SAID NO. NEVER. I WILL GO DOWN SCREAMING IN BLOODY FURY.
BUT I WAS WRONG.
THERE IS NOTHING BUT LOVE HERE, AT THE END.

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #4

NEW YORK.
"RIGHT NOW, THE VALKYRIES ARE WEAVING THROUGH THE FABRIC OF REALITY.
"BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH. AS ONLY VALKYRIES CAN DO.
"AS THE NEEDLE PIERCES TRUTH AND ETERNITY, OUR SISTERS GUIDING IT SUFFER.
"YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SEE. YOU KNOW THEIR PAIN.
"THEIR THREAD IS NOT ONE OF BLOOD BUT OF LIGHT. ODIN WILLING, IT WILL SEVER THE CONNECTION BETWEEN KNULL'S NECROSWORD AND THE HEADLESS CELESTIAL.
"IT WILL ROB KNULL OF A POWER HE DID NOT KNOW HE HAD. AND WITH THE CONNECTION LOST..."
THE SPACE BETWEEN WORLDS.

VALHALLA.
...THE SOUL-DEVOURING CELESTIAL WILL BE VULNERABLE.
IF THEY'RE SUCCESSFUL...
...IT'S BEATABLE.
AND SO IS THE KING IN BLACK.
WE HAVE HUNTED THIS CELESTIAL. THIS ABOMINATION OF THE AFTERLIFE. WE HAVE FOUGHT IT AND LOST.
NOW WE HAVE A CHANCE TO SET THINGS RIGHT.
AND I ASK YOU, THOUGH WE BE DEAD AND ENJOYING THE ETERNAL REWARD WE FOUGHT SO LONG TO EARN, IS IT NOT OUR DUTY TO HELP OUR LIVING SISTERS IF WE CAN?
THE DEAD HAVE NO DUTY, BRUNNHILDE.
AND OUR SISTERS WILL FAIL ONCE MORE.
THIS IS A FOOL'S ERRAND.
BUT I AM OLD AND FOOLISH.
AND MORE THAN THAT, I AM FURIOUS.
I SAY WE FIGHT!
YOU HEARD IVANIR, SISTERS--
--WE FIGHT!

IT'S LIKE LOOKING AT THE UNIVERSE THROUGH THE EYES OF A GOD.
SOMETHING I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO DO FROM TIME TO TIME.
I FEEL EVERYTHING, SEE EVERYTHING.
I FEEL THE WARMTH OF THE WOMB AND THE PAIN SHAKING THROUGH THE BODY AS IT DIES.
AND I FEEL THE NEEDLE AS IT MOVES THROUGH THE EVER AND ALL.
I AM JANE FOSTER. I'M A DOCTOR, A CANCER SURVIVOR, A VALKYRIE.
I STAND BETWEEN THE WORLDS OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.
THE ONLY QUESTION IS...TO WHICH WILL I BE RETURNING?
WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT!

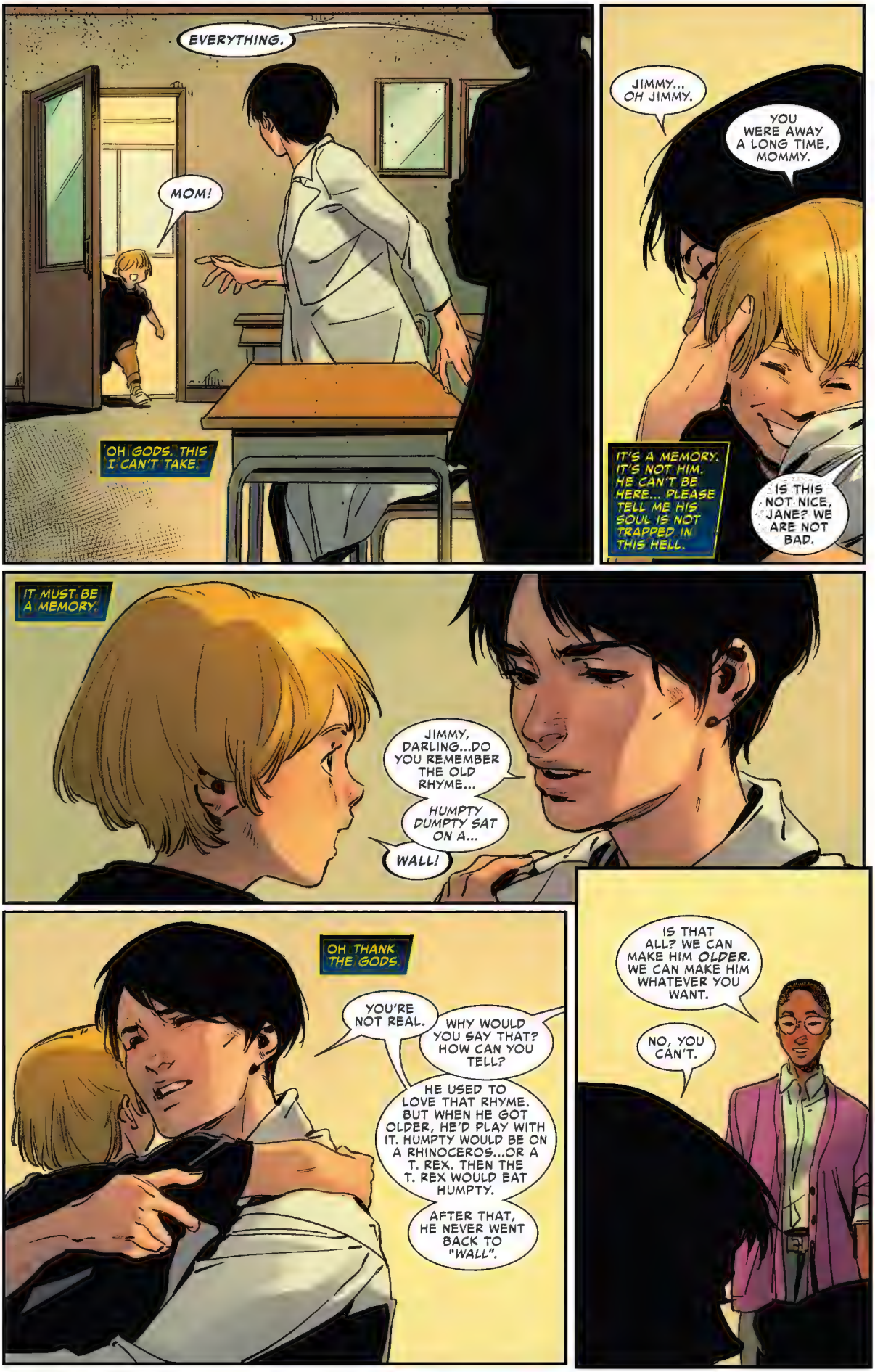
THAT... IS A BIG SWORD.
STAY BEHIND ME, DANI. AND DON'T LET GO OF THE THREAD. WE HAVE TO FINISH THE RITUAL, BUT MAYBE I CAN BUY US SOME TIME.
JANE, WHAT THE HELL CAN YOU POSSIBLY DO AGAINST THAT?
YOU SOUND LIKE MY ONCOLOGIST!
I CAN ALREADY HEAR THE CHORUS OF THE DEAD.
ALL RIGHT, UNDRJARN.
TIME TO BE MIGHTY.

I KNOW THAT IF I SEARCH THROUGH THE VOICES, I'LL HEAR THE SENTRY AMONG THEM.
CRAK
RRRRRRRRGGGGHH!!!
BUT I HEAR ANOTHER VOICE TOO. ONE THAT IS VERY MUCH ALIVE.
YOU BRAINLESS--

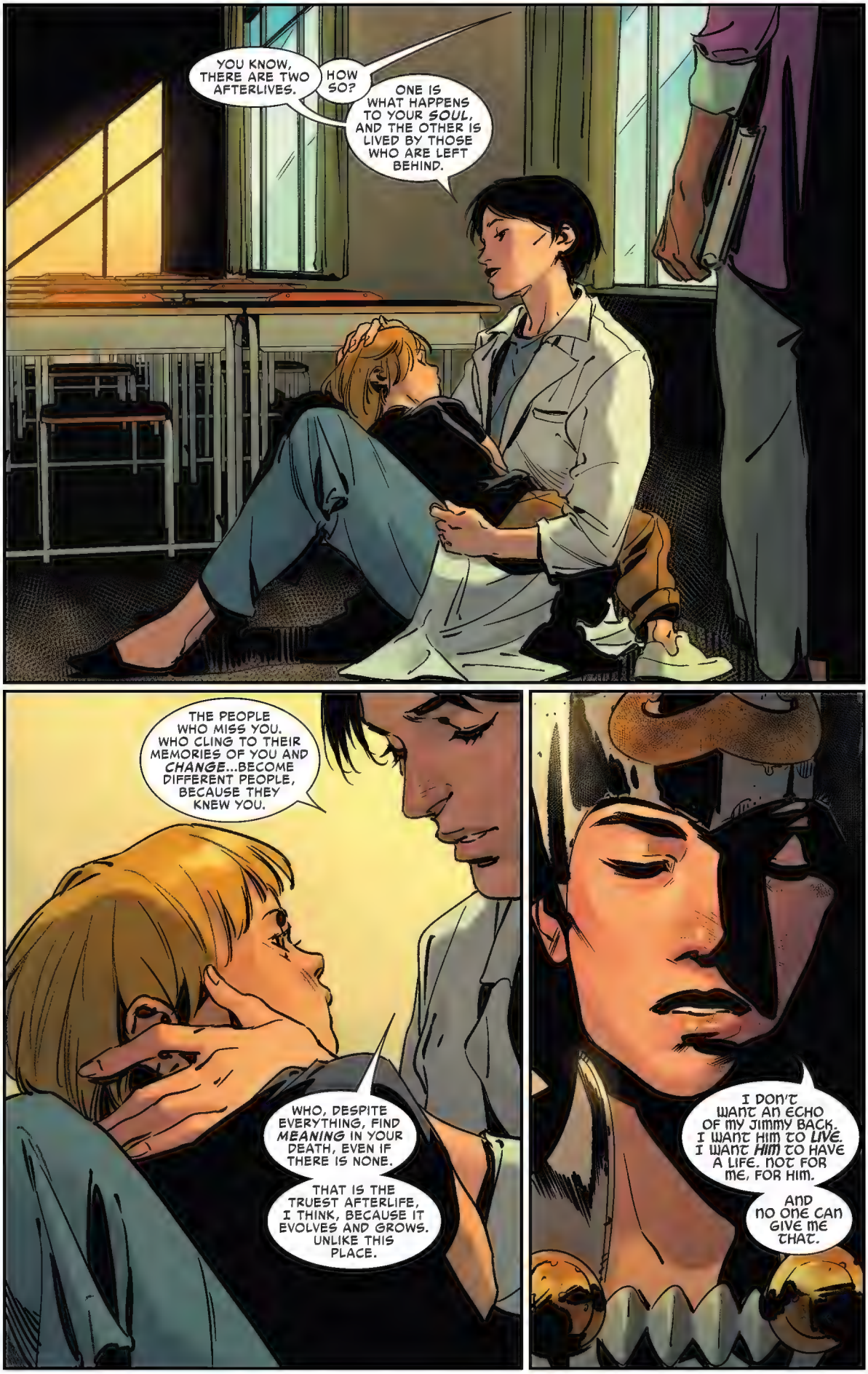
--BEARDLESS--
--DUNG STAIN OF A GOD!
YOU'RE A SPINELESS EXCUSE FOR A DEITY! YOU AND KNULL BOTH!
AND TODAY'S THE DAY YOU START ROTTING IN HEL!
YOU CAME BACK!
WELL, THIS HORSE OF YOURS IS VERY...
INSISTENT? INFURIATING?
UNIMPRESSED? HARD TO UNDERSTAND?
BEGGIN' THY BLOODY PARDON!
CONVINCING... BUT YES.
AND I FIGURED IF WE'RE GOING TO VALHALLA...

...WE MIGHT AS WELL BEAT THE RUSH!
IN THE PIECES OF THE CELESTIAL'S FRAGMENTING ARMOR, I CAN SEE THE DEAD. THEIR ENTIRE LIVES ARE THERE, IF I LOOK CLOSE ENOUGH.
I WISH I COULD SAVE THEM.
UNDRJARN!
BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM AND TOO LITTLE OF ME.
NO!

THIS IS MY OLD CLASSROOM...
THIS IS ME AS I ONCE WAS.
JANE?
AND I KNOW THAT VOICE.
MISS ANDERSON?
SIT DOWN, JANE. I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.
SHE WAS THE KIND OF TEACHER WHO SHAPED PEOPLE.
THIS IS NOT REAL.
WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT, JANE?
MOM WOULD NEVER LET ME WEAR THIS DRESS TO SCHOOL. AND...
...I WAS DOING SOMETHING ELSE... I WAS FIGHTING, I THINK. MY WEAPON DID SOMETHING...
OH DEAR, YOU SHOULDN'T FIGHT, JANE.
AND YOU ARE DEAD. I MOURNED YOU. FOR YEARS.
THAT IS NOT A NICE THING TO SAY.
NO...YOU'RE NOT HER. YOU'RE THE CELESTIAL. YOU'RE IN MY HEAD. OR I'M IN YOURS.
AH. SHE TOLD YOU THINGS, THE OTHER OF YOUR KIN. THAT'S WHY YOU DOUBT. SHE WAS STUBBORN AND HARD TO PLEASE.
I HAD HOPED FOR A MORE OPEN MIND IN YOU. WE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY, JANE.
WE CAN GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU WANT.


EVERYTHING.
MOM!
OH GODS. THIS I CAN'T TAKE.
JIMMY... OH JIMMY.
YOU WERE AWAY A LONG TIME, MOMMY.
IT'S A MEMORY. IT'S NOT HIM. HE CAN'T BE HERE... PLEASE TELL ME HIS SOUL IS NOT TRAPPED IN THIS HELL.
IS THIS NOT NICE, JANE? WE ARE NOT BAD.
IT MUST BE A MEMORY.
JIMMY, DARLING...DO YOU REMEMBER THE OLD RHYME...
HUMPTY DUMPTY SAT ON A...
WALL!
OH THANK THE GODS.
YOU'RE NOT REAL.
WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT? HOW CAN YOU TELL?
HE USED TO LOVE THAT RHYME. BUT WHEN HE GOT OLDER, HE'D PLAY WITH IT. HUMPTY WOULD BE ON A RHINOCEROS...OR A T. REX. THEN THE T. REX WOULD EAT HUMPTY.
AFTER THAT, HE NEVER WENT BACK TO "WALL".
IS THAT ALL? WE CAN MAKE HIM OLDER. WE CAN MAKE HIM WHATEVER YOU WANT.
NO, YOU CAN'T.

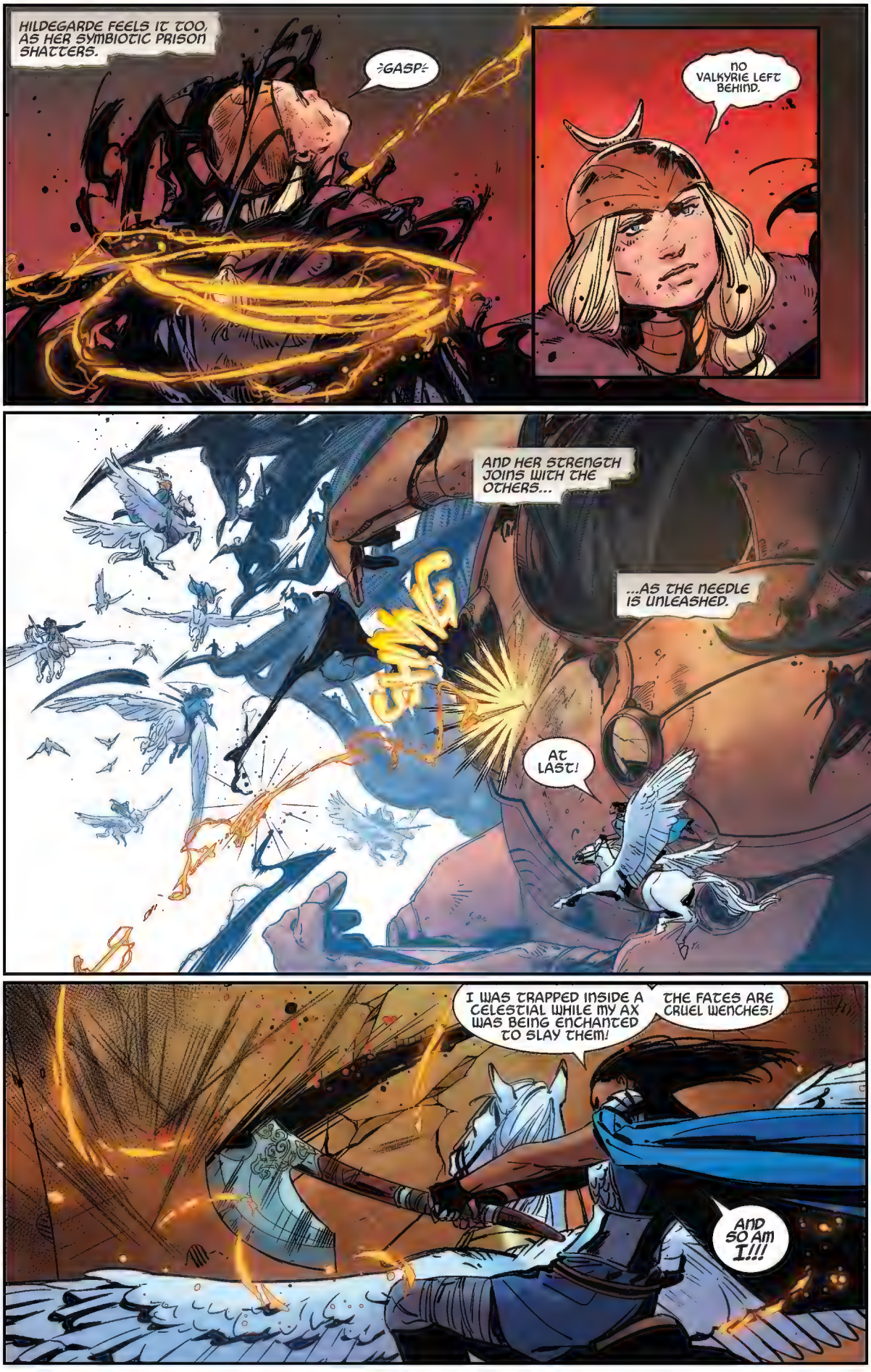
"TRY US."
JANE GOT PULLED INSIDE THE CELESTIAL!
BLAST!
OH IT!
I'LL COVER YOU.
NO, HORSE, YOU CAN'T JUST GALLOP IN THERE! IT'LL...
ARGH! BY THE NINE HAUGHTY MOTHERS OF HEIMDALL! I CAN'T BE OUTBRAVED BY A HORSE!
WAIT FOR ME!
I CAN HEAR HER! STRAIGHT AHEAD.
WHAT A WAY TO DIE, MY FRIEND.
OOOO


YOU KNOW, THERE ARE TWO AFTERLIVES.
HOW SO?
ONE IS WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR SOUL, AND THE OTHER IS LIVED BY THOSE WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND.
THE PEOPLE WHO MISS YOU. WHO CLING TO THEIR MEMORIES OF YOU AND CHANGE...BECOME DIFFERENT PEOPLE, BECAUSE THEY KNEW YOU.
WHO, DESPITE EVERYTHING, FIND MEANING IN YOUR DEATH, EVEN IF THERE IS NONE.
THAT IS THE TRUEST AFTERLIFE, I THINK, BECAUSE IT EVOLVES AND GROWS. UNLIKE THIS PLACE.
I DON'T WANT AN ECHO OF MY JIMMY BACK. I WANT HIM TO LIVE. I WANT HIM TO HAVE A LIFE. NOT FOR ME, FOR HIM.
AND NO ONE CAN GIVE ME THAT.

"NOT EVEN YOU."
THE VALKYRIES!!!
THE VALKYRIES RIDE AGAIN!
INDEED WE DO. I SEE THE CONNECTION WITH KNULL ISN'T YET SEVERED.
AND, DANI MOONSTAR, ARE YOU WEARING THE HOLY THREADS OF YMJA AS A BRACELET?
DAMN CELESTIAL ATTACKED US BEFORE WE COULD FINISH THE RITUAL!
ALSO, I THINK IT LOOKS GREAT ON ME, BRUNNHILDE!
RIGHT. GIVE ME THE THREAD. WE WILL END IT TOGETHER.
IVANIR! JANE IS TRAPPED INSIDE THE CELESTIAL! WE HAVE TO GET HER OUT!
THEN YOU BETTER HURRY, GIRL!

SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT. SOMETHING IS HAPPENING OUTSIDE. THERE'S URGENCY IN ITS VOICE.
YOU CRAVE OTHER THINGS TOO.
WE CAN GIVE YOU POWER. KNOWLEDGE. STRENGTH.
THE THINGS YOU NEED TO MAKE THE UNIVERSE BETTER. YOU COULD BE A GOD AGAIN.
A HINT OF DESPERATION.
WE HAVE EVERYTHING. WE ARE SO MANY. THE ONLY THING WE LACK IS LIFE.
IF YOU JOIN US, IF YOU GIVE US LIFE, WE CAN BE ANYTHING. ANYONE.
DON'T YOU SEE, JANE? WE CAN DEFEAT KNULL! WE HAVE THE STRENGTH OF MILLIONS!
HIS HIVE COULD NOT BEAT OURS.
I CONSIDER IT, FOR A SECOND.
I WOULD GLADLY GIVE MY LIFE TO SAVE MIDGARD.
BUT NOT LIKE THIS.
YOU HAVE TO STOP NOW. LET THE OTHER SOULS GO.

ONE LAST TIME...
...WE BREAK EXISTENCE.
DEATH IS NEVER BORING, IS IT?
AS THE VALKYRIES PULL THE THREAD CONNECTING THE NECROSWORD TO THE DEAD, PULLING IT FROM THE FABRIC OF REALITY...
...KNULL FEELS THE LOSS.
AND VOWS THAT GODS WILL SUFFER FOR IT.


HILDEGARDE FEELS IT TOO, AS HER SYMBIOTIC PRISON SHATTERS.
=GASP=
NO VALKYRIE LEFT BEHIND.
AND HER STRENGTH JOINS WITH THE OTHERS...
...AS THE NEEDLE IS UNLEASHED.
CRACK
AT LAST!
I WAS TRAPPED INSIDE A CELESTIAL WHILE MY AX WAS BEING ENCHANTED TO SLAY THEM!
THE FATES ARE CRUEL WENCHES!
AND SO AM I!!!

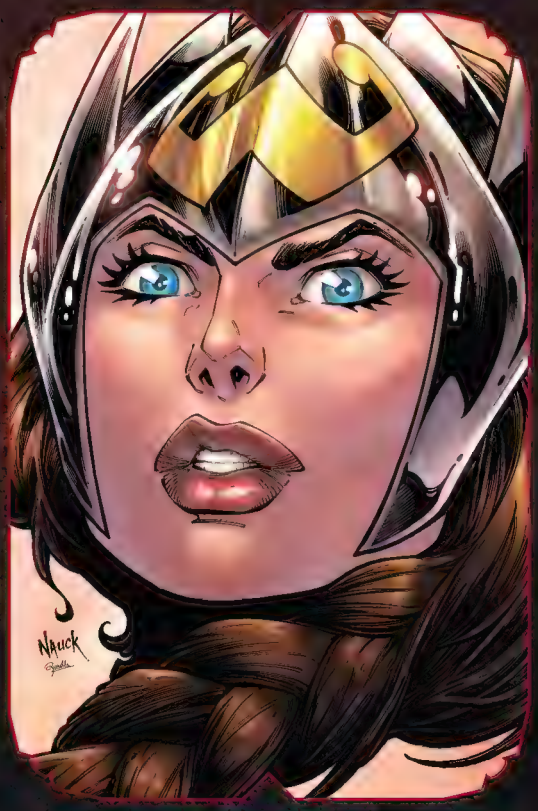
JANE! THE ARMY OF VALHALLA IS HERE, YOU HAVE TO GET OUT BEFORE THEY TEAR THIS THING APART!
THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM THIS. YOU HAVE TO LET YOUR PRISONERS GO. LET THEM PASS.
WHY? WHY WOULD I LET THEM GO?
BECAUSE IT WILL DETERMINE WHERE YOU GO NEXT.
YOU HAVE NOT!
AND I HAVE LET GO, IN MY OWN WAY. I LONG FOR MY BOY. I MISS HIM. BUT I KNOW, IN MY HEART...
...ALL THE KING'S HORSES AND ALL THE KING'S MEN--
--COULDN'T PUT HUMPTY TOGETHER AGAIN.
NOW YOU.
LET THEM GO.

IT IS THE END AND A BEGINNING.
THE NEXT.
IT'S...IT'S LIKE BREATHING IN FORGIVENESS.
IT IS A THOUSAND THINGS THE LIVING HAVE NO WORDS FOR.
THROUGH THE HAZE, THE VALKYRIES SEE FRAGMENTS OF LIVES LED AND STORIES TOLD.
THERE YOU ARE.

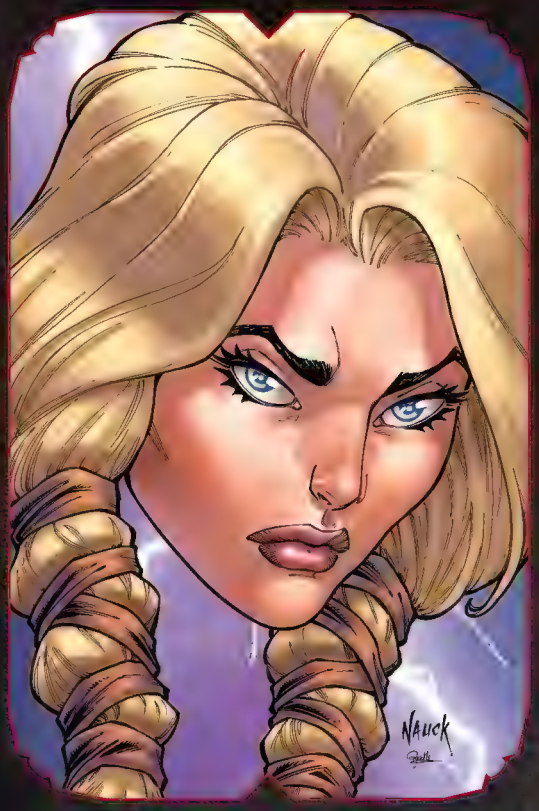
FINISHED.
REMEMBER THAT FIRST NIGHT ON KLUETH? AFTER OUR SHIP BROKE DOWN?
THE ENDLESS WAIT FOR THAT INEDIBLE FOOD?
IT TASTED LIKE WET, USED BANDAGES.
AND THE LITERAL ACID RAIN? WE HUDDLED UNDER THE BRIDGE...
...SORE AND COLDER THAN A FROST GIANT'S ASS?
THAT WAS THE BEST DAY OF MY LIFE. UNTIL THE NEXT. AND THE DAY AFTER THAT.
ALTA, I...
MINE TOO.
DON'T FEEL SORRY, JANE.
BUT I AM SORRY, ROBERT. I WAS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT YOUR SOUL.
IN THERE... WAS THAT ACTUALLY YOU? DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU SAID?
I REMEMBER. IT WAS A PART OF ME, I THINK. THE FURIOUS, FRUSTRATED AND DISAPPOINTED PART.
BUT I CAN HARDLY HEAR IT NOW. I FEEL WHOLE, FINALLY.
READY.

THE DEAD ARE CALM AND DISTANT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, BRUNNHILDE. I HAVE ONE LAST ADVENTURE IN ME!
IVANIR INSISTED.
WHERE WILL THEY GO?
THEIR FIGHT IS OVER.
THE NEXT-- WHEREVER THAT IS FOR CELESTIALS. WE WILL TAKE OURS TO VALHALLA.
THE VALKYRIES CANNOT SAY THE SAME. THE BATTLE IS WAITING FOR THEM ON MIDGARD.
WE HEARD YOU IN THERE. WHO WAS THE LITTLE BOY?
MY SON, JIMMY. HE DIED WHEN HE WAS 8.
AND HAVE YOU FOUND THE MEANING? BECAUSE I'VE LOOKED AND LOOKED, AND I'VE GOT...NOTHING.
NOT YET. BUT...
...IN THE FEW SHORT YEARS I GOT WITH HIM, HE TAUGHT ME PATIENCE, SACRIFICE, KINDNESS AND LOVE. ALL THE BEST OF ME IS HIS DOING. I CAN'T GIVE UP ON IT NOW.
I SUPPOSE THE ONLY THING YOU CAN DO IS GO ON, AND HOPE THAT THE GOOD SHE LEFT IN YOU LEADS THE WAY, YOU KNOW?
WELL, SHE DID TEACH ME TO THROW AN AX.
AMONG...OTHER THINGS.
NICER THINGS.
WE WILL NEED YOUR AX, VALKYRIE.
IT IS A BATTLE FOR GRIEF.

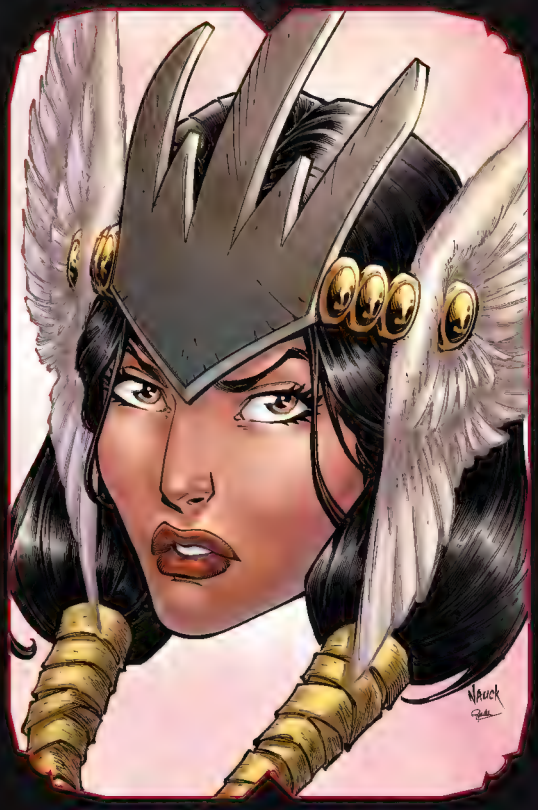
FOR REGRET AND LOVE.
WE WILL NEED ALL THE THINGS WE CAN CARRY IN THE NAME OF THOSE WE'VE LOST IF WE ARE TO DEFEAT THE DARKNESS COVERING MIDGARD.
DO YOU REALLY THINK WE CAN BEAT KNULL?
A BATTLE FOR HEARTACHES AND FOR LAUGHTER. FOR QUIET DAYS AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS.
I DO NOT KNOW THAT WE CAN'T.
THAT MEANS YOU HAVE HOPE, DANI MOONSTAR.
THAT IS ENOUGH FOR ME.
HOPE? AH, WHAT THE HEL. IT'S WORTH A SHOT.
FOR THIS UNLIKELY, FRAGILE THING THAT THE GODS SEEK TO CONTROL--
--OR DESTROY.
A BATTLE FOR LIFE.



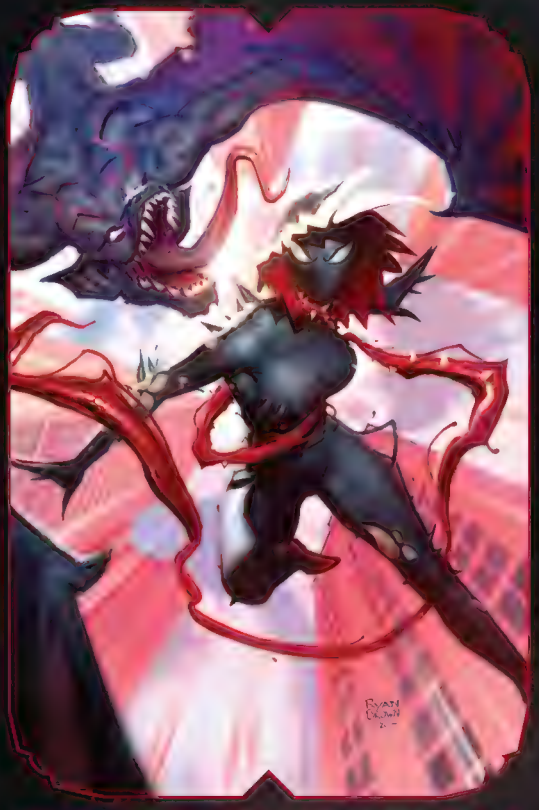
KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1
HEADSHOT VARIANT BY
TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG



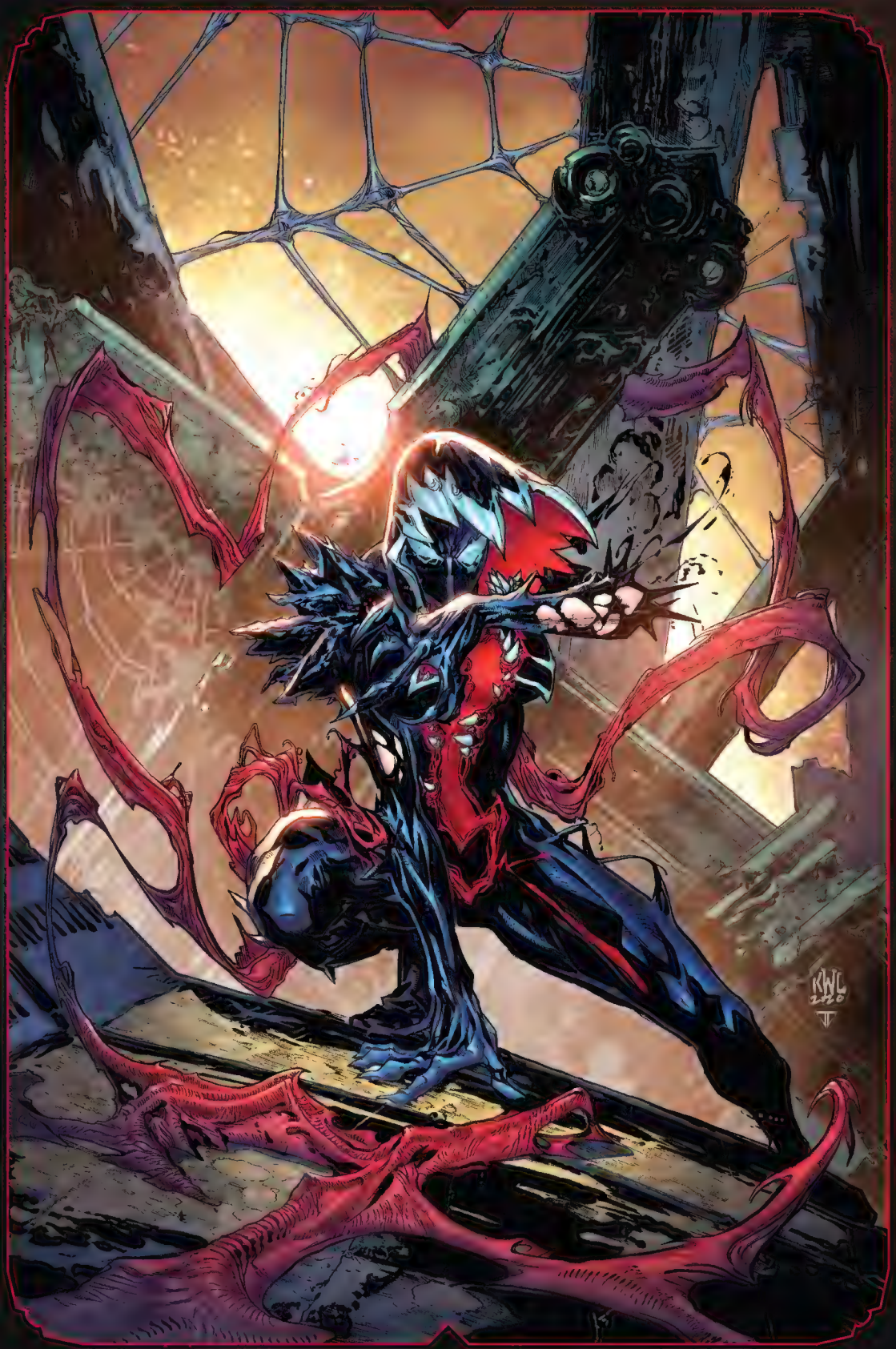
KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #3
HEADSHOT VARIANT BY
TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG



KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #4
HEADSHOT VARIANT BY
TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG



KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #3 VARIANT BY
RYAN BROWN



KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1

THE MARVEL UNIVERSE. NOW.
EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY. WHERE I'M ATTENDING INTERDIMENSIONAL COLLEGE. MY HOME.
BURIED IN SYMBIOTE GOO. SO, YOU KNOW...
...THE USUAL.

GWEN STACY OF EARTH-65.
THE HAUNTING GHOST-SPIDER.
MY NAME IS GWEN STACY. THIS ISN'T MY EARTH.
WHEN I GOT HERE AND SAID IT WAS GOING TO TAKE SOMETHING BIG FOR ME TO SUIT UP IN THIS DIMENSION, I DIDN'T MEAN IT LITERALLY.
IT'S RAINING DRAGONS. LIKE, LITERAL DRAGONS.
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!
BEST PART? THESE THINGS DON'T SET OFF MY SPIDER-SENSE AT ALL. ARE THEY DANGEROUS? UH, YEAH. CAN I FEEL THEM COMING?
THAT WOULD BE A NO. N-O. NOT HAPPENING.
THWIP
THEY'RE RELATED TO VENOM, SOME SUPER VILLAIN WHO'S FOUGHT THIS WORLD'S PETER PARKER--BUT THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT HERE.
THE SCREAMING SOUNDED LIKE IT WAS COMING FROM SOMEWHERE RIGHT OVER--
AHHHHHHHHHHH!
--THERE.

HOLD ON, I'M COMING!
WHATEVER THIS STUFF IS...
I DON'T THINK I SHOULD TOUCH IT.
YOU GOT THIS, GWEN. THIS IS--
OH.
YOU'RE A SUPER HERO, AREN'T YOU?! HELP ME!
PLEASE, ANYBODY! HELLLP!
I'M ALWAYS A SUPER HERO. EVEN WHEN I'M BEING SEMI-RETIRED.
THWIP
YOU CAN CALL ME GHOST-SPIDER
HOLD ON!

NNNNGH!
H-HANG ON!
DO YOU THINK I'D LET GO?!
AIIIGH!
AIIIIIIHHHHHHHH--
BLOOD
NO, NO, NO! WE'RE GETTING YOU OUT OF THERE!
WE'RE GETTING YOU~ AHHH!
SNAP!

WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT?
H-HELLO? CAN YOU HEAR ME? ARE YOU ALIVE IN THERE?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND! HOW IS IT STRONGER THAN MY WEBBING?
THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE-- IT'S...IT'S MAKING HIM...
...A MONSTER.
WHAT THE WHAT NOW?!
THWIP
THWIP
I AM SO OUT OF MY ELEMENT WITH THIS.

WHAT THE @#!% WAS THAT?
TAP!
WHATEVER IT WAS, IT'S HAVING AN EFFECT ON MY SUIT. I CAN FEEL IT, LIKE A SHADOW.
SO I WON'T DO THAT AGAIN.
TLAC!
I'M BACK!
I NEED A PLAN. I NEED PETER. BUT FIRST...
BANG
...I NEED TO KEEP MY ROOMMATES SAFE.
OKAY, YOU ALL NEED TO STAY INSIDE!
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE BACK AN HOUR AGO!
I WAS TRYING TO FIND US A WAY OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE POWER GOES OUT LIKE OUR PHONES DID! WE'RE THE ONLY PEOPLE IN THIS WING WHO MISSED EVAC.

I'M SORRY I WORRIED YOU. I'M STILL WILLING TO GO ON SCAVENGING RUNS, BUT IT'S NASTY OUT THERE.
THOSE DRAGON THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE, AND THE GOO IS SPREADING.
IT'S NOT SAFE OUTSIDE. I BARELY MADE IT BACK.
I'M SURE THE AVENGERS KNOW. THAT'S WHAT HEROES ARE FOR.
THEY SAVE PEOPLE.
YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE THE ONE WHO GOES OUT LOOKING FOR SUPPLIES, YOU KNOW. WE CAN TAKE TURNS--
NO! I MEAN, I'M CLAUSTROPHOBIC. BRR. I NEED TO GET OUT ONCE IN A WHILE.
WE ALL WANT TO GET OUT. HOW BAD CAN IT ACTUALLY BE?
CARRIE! YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO SAY THAT!
SPLINTER
REEEEEEEEEE!
AHHHHHHHH!

HEY, UGLY! PICK ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE!
THUD
THUD
SKREEEEEEEEEE!
COME ON! CHASE THE GIRL IN THE COSTUME MADE OF LIVING SPIDERS, NOT THE INNOCENT CO-EDS!
NO IDEA WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THIS THING TOUCHES ME.
NO TIME TO BE CUTE.
CRRRACK
NEED TO HIT IT WITH EVERYTHING I'VE GOT. NEED TO WIN.
SKREEEE!
AHHHHH!
TWIP!
TWIP!
D-D-DRAGON!
NOT! HELPING!
IT'S BLOCKING THE WINDOW. THE HELL AM I SUPPOSED TO DO HERE?
COME ON! CHASE ME, DAMMIT!
YOU GIRLS STAY COVERED! DON'T LET THE GOO TOUCH YOU!

REEEE!
LEAVE THEM ALONE!
REEE!
KEEP COMING, BIG GUY! TASTY SPIDER-HERO STRAIGHT AHEAD!
SCREEE!
TWIPP!
TWIPP!
WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS...
...BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA.
WHAM
I DON'T--OOF--HAVE TIME FOR YOU RIGHT NOW!

NO ROOMMATES, BUT THREE ROOMMATE-SIZED PODS OF SYMBIOTE GOO.
NO...
I LED IT AWAY.
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE SAFE.
REEEEE!
YOU WERE PRETTY GOOD ROOMMATES. I'M SORRY.
REEEEEE!
NOW IS NOT THE TIME! I'M MOURNING!
WHAM
REEEEEEEEE!

I'M SO, SO SORRY.
THWIP
I SHOULD HAVE SAVED YOU. MAYBE I STILL CAN.
EITHER WAY, THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU GET TO EAT ME.
RHEEEEEEEEE!
LET'S FACE IT. THIS IS NOT HOW I EXPECTED TO SPEND MY DAY.

TWIPP!!
THEN AGAIN, I DOUBT ANYONE'S DAY IS GOING THE WAY THEY PLANNED.
THWIP
THWIP
SQUELCH
CAN'T TOUCH IT. CAN'T HIT IT. CAN'T STOP IT.
BUT AS LONG AS IT'S FLYING AWAY FROM THE DORM, IT'S NOT HURTING ANYONE.

WAIT FOR IT...
WAIT FOR IT...
TWIP!
TWIP!
REEEEEEEE!
TURN, BIG GUY! TURN!

PHYSICS CAN BE FUN!
SPLAT
OKAY. OKAY. GOTTA FIGURE OUT WHAT'S GOING ON, FIND PETER OR MILES--THEY'LL HAVE THE SITREP...
NO, THAT'S NOT GOING TO WORK.
THWIP
THIS STUFF--WHATEVER IT IS--IT'S ADAPTING. IT KNOWS IT CAN GET ME THROUGH THE WEB.
GOOD THING I HAVE OTHER MEANS OF TRANSIT.
I SWORE I WOULDN'T USE MY TELEPORTER NECKLACE TO GO HOME UNLESS IT WAS AN EMERGENCY.
THIS COUNTS.
WHOOM
WHAT THE--
THIS ISN'T HOW IT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK!
WHAT IS HAPPENING?!

EARTH-65. NOT VERY LONG AGO.
YOU MAY AS WELL STOP STRUGGLING, MISS WATSON. THERE'S NO POINT TO IT ANYWAY.
IN THE ABSENCE OF OUR FAIR MISS STACY, I NEED YOUR HELP WITH A PROJECT I'VE BEEN WORKING ON.
YOU SEE, AFTER OUR LAST ENCOUNTER I WAS ABLE TO ACQUIRE SOME OF HER FASCINATING SPIDERS.
THEY'RE BONDED TO HER, AND SHE HAS A BOND WITH YOU.
I'M WONDERING IF THEY MIGHT BRIDGE THE DIVIDE.
NOTHING CAN KEEP GWEN STACY FROM THE JACKAL.
AHHHHHHHHHH!
WHOOM
GWEN!
NOT THE OUTCOME I WAS EXPECTING...

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!
FEELS LIKE I'M BEING SPLIT IN TWO! BUT IS THAT --IS THAT MJ?!
HANG ON!
WHAT IS HAPPENING?!
MJ! HOLD ON!
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.
THIS IS NOT HOW MY NECKLACE WORKS.
SWIPE

I'VE GOT YOU, MJ. I'VE GOT YOU.
GWEN?!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?! WHERE ARE WE?!
HEY, MJ. BEEN A MINUTE.
HANG O--
SLAP!
SPLORCH!
MJ!
--AHHHH--
=GLUB=

MJ?
STILL THE MARVEL UNIVERSE.
INTERESTING.
KNULL. GOD OF SYMBIOTES.
KINDA RUNNING THIS NIGHTMARE PARTY.
WHAT ARE YOU, LITTLE LIGHT?
MINE. BUT NOT MINE. SOMETHING ELSE. SOMETHING OTHER...SOMETHING LIKE ME.
EVERYTHING IS MINE. AND NOW I SHALL ACQUIRE IT.

MJ, HOLD ON!
BLOOP
WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU'RE GOING TO DIE?
MJ?
MARY JANE ISN'T HERE, LITTLE SPIDER. ONLY KNULL.
AND AS HIS WILLING DISCIPLE, WE THINK WE NEED A NEW NAME. THE NAME OF OUR LORD'S MOST FAVORED CHILD.

YOU CAN CALL ME CARNAGE!
...OH #$*@.

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #2

OKAY, THIS IS BAD.
IT DOESN'T JUST LOOK BAD. IT IS DEFINITELY, ABSOLUTELY, NO QUESTION ABOUT IT, BAD.
I THINK I'M IN SHOCK.
MJ IS SUPPOSED TO BE SAFE IN MY HOME DIMENSION, NOT HERE, COVERED IN EVIL SYMBIOTE. SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE SAFE. THAT'S WHY I LEFT.

WHAT'S WRONG, GHOST-SPIDER? KNULL GOT YOUR TONGUE?
WHAT THE HELL IS A KNULL?
DON'T WORRY! I CAN GET IT BACK!
NOPE!
NO TIME FOR THAT NOW. NEED TO FOCUS ON ONE THING, AND ONE THING ONLY: SAVING MJ.
MJ, I DON'T KNOW HOW THIS HAS HAPPENED TO YOU. I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE HERE--
TAP!
--BUT WE'RE GOING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIX IT. WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT RIGHT.
ARE YOU SO THREATENED BY MY STRENGTH THAT ALL YOU CAN THINK TO DO IS TAKE IT AWAY?
I'M NOT THREATENED, MJ! LOOK AT YOURSELF! THAT THING IS GOING TO KILL YOU! YOU'RE NOT STRONG ENOUGH--
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW STRONG I AM!
YOU DON'T KNOW ME! YOU LEFT ME!

FLAV MUSIC STOP
I ALREADY TOLD YOU. FROM NOW ON--
--YOU--
--SHOULD--
--CALL--
--ME--
CARNAGE!
WHOA!
MJ-- CARNAGE-- I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU.
AND I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO FIGHT ME EITHER! WE'RE FRIENDS, MJ!
...FRIENDS?

SINCE SIXTH GRADE...
...REMEMBER?
I REMEMBER...
PETER PARKER DIED IN YOUR ARMS!
I REMEMBER THAT YOU LEFT US!
YOU LET OUR WHOLE BAND, YOUR "FRIENDS," GET KIDNAPPED BY A MADMAN!
YOU MADE THE WORLD A WORSE PLACE, AND THEN YOU LEFT YOUR MESSES FOR US TO CLEAN UP!
I'M THE FRONT WOMAN! I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE ONE WITH ALL THE POWER! BUT YOU HAD TO BE SPECIAL, DIDN'T YOU?! WELL, NOT ANYMORE!

HAVE I REALLY HURT HER *THIS* BADLY?
HAS SHE ALWAYS BEEN THIS MAD AT ME, OR IS IT THE SYMBIOTE SPEAKING?
THWIP
THWIP
NO WONDER YOU HAD TO FLEE TO *ANOTHER WORLD*-- YOU'D ALREADY *RUINED* YOUR OWN!
TWIP!
YANK
SCREEEEEEEEE!
NEED TO STOP HER. NEED TO GET MY SUIT, THE *SPIDERS*, OFF HER...AND HER *AX*.
I CAN'T MAKE OBJECTS THIS BIG OUT OF *MY* SUIT...

WHAT THE--?!
THESE ARE MY SPIDERS, BUT THEY'RE RUNNING AWAY FROM ME...
DRIP
HA HAA HA HAAAAA HA!
NOT YOURS, STACY! FOR ONCE, SOMETHING'S NOT YOURS!
NOTHING IS YOURS ANYMORE!
EVERYTHING BELONGS TO KNULL!
NOW COME HERE, LITTLE SPIDER!

AHHHHHGH!
KNULL WANTS TO MEAT YOU.
AIGH!
I'M SORRY. MEET YOU.
AHHAHAHAAAAA!

WHERE... WHERE AM I?
WHAT THE...?
WAIT, WHY DOES IT FEEL LIKE I'M--
--FALLING?
AHHH

THWIP
SNAP
OKAY, PLAN B IT IS...
IS THIS PLACE REAL OR...?
NOWHERE FOR ME TO LAND. GUESS I JUST NEED TO FIND THE BOTTOM.
RRRIP
AHHHHHH!

NOT HOW I WANTED TO FIND THE BOTTOM.
OW. IMPACT DOESN'T NORMALLY HURT THAT MUCH.
MJ!
YOUR FRIEND IS SAFE.
OR RATHER, WHAT REMAINS OF HER IS.
WHO ARE YOU?
ACCORDING TO THE COLORS YOU WEAR, YOUR GOD.
OKAY. THIS GUY.
I BET THIS GUY IS KNULL.
WHAT ARE YOU, LITTLE LIGHT?
WHY ARE YOU NOT ALREADY MINE?

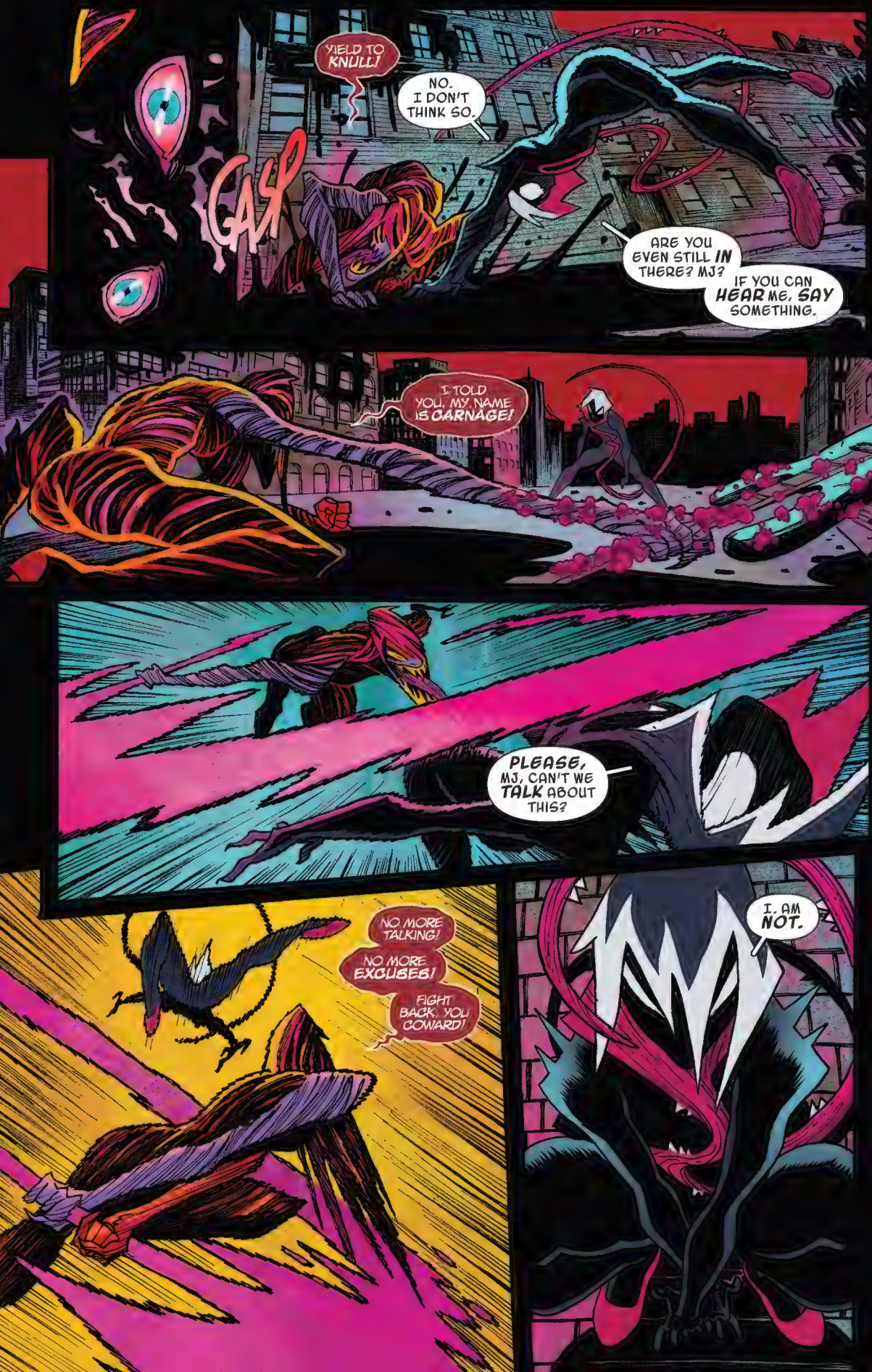
WHERE I COME FROM, WE FIGURED OUT A LONG TIME AGO THAT YOU CAN'T OWN PEOPLE.
DID YOU NOW?
WELL, I OWN YOUR FRIEND.
I MUST ADMIT, MOST PEOPLE PUT UP MORE OF A FIGHT.
SHE HARBORS A LOT OF RAGE TOWARD YOU, LITTLE LIGHT. ANY IDEA WHY?
NO?
LET ME SHOW YOU.
EARTH-65. A LONG TIME AGO.

--AND WE'RE GOING TO BE THE BEST BAND, WE'RE GOING TO BE SO FAMOUS, AND--
UH-HUH.
--MAYBE WE CAN EVEN PLAY FOR PROM, AND--
--AND YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME AT ALL, ARE YOU, GWEN?
UH-HUH.
AND YOU'RE GONNA LET ME SHAVE YOUR HEAD.
UH-HU-- WHAT?
SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THAT...
GWEN, MAKE SURE YOU DON'T RUSH THE--
SLAM
RROOOOOAR!
WHAT THE HECK?!
GWEN--?

WHOA THERE, BIG BOY! YOU'RE NOT ON MY DANCE CARD!
WHAM WHAM
RAAAAAA!
WHERE IS SHE? THAT GIRL IS NEVER ON TIME.

IT'S LIKE SHE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT OUR CHANCE TO BE SPECIAL.
YOU SEE, CHILD? YOU NURTURED THIS RAGE.
I WOULD BE IMPRESSED IF I THOUGHT YOU HAD ANY IDEA WHAT YOU HAD DONE.
I--BUT-- NO. MJ'S MY FRIEND.
SHE WAS.
AND NOW SHE'S MINE. A CONDUIT BETWEEN WHATEVER YOU ARE AND MY GLORY, UNTIL YOU CAN ACCEPT IT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, ACCEPT IT?
CAN'T YOU FEEL ME KNOCKING?
YOU CAN'T COME IN!
WHAM

AHAHAHAHAHAAAA!


YIELD TO KNULL!
NO. I DON'T THINK SO.
GASP
ARE YOU EVEN STILL IN THERE? MJ?
IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, SAY SOMETHING.
I TOLD YOU, MY NAME IS CARNAGE!
PLEASE, MJ, CAN'T WE TALK ABOUT THIS?
NO MORE TALKING!
NO MORE EXCUSES!
FIGHT BACK, YOU COWARD!
I. AM NOT.

A COWARD!
WHAM
RRRAGH!
POW
YOU'RE NOT SPECIAL ANYMORE!
AH!
I NEVER SAID...I WAS...
THEN WHY IS IT ALWAYS ABOUT YOU?!

BECAUSE YOU WANT IT TO BE!
I DIDN'T DO ANY OF THIS ON PURPOSE!
NOT EVER!
WE HAVE TO FIX YOU!
I'M PERFECT AS I AM!
IF YOUR SUIT IS ANYTHING LIKE MINE, YOU'RE NOT! IT'S GOING TO KILL YOU!
IT'S A MONSTER, MJ! AND IT'S EATING YOU ALIVE. I FEEL IT EVERY DAY, BUT MY POWERS HOLD IT OFF. I'M RESISTANT TO IT!
BUT YOU'RE NOT, CARNAGE-- MJ--PLEASE.

YOU MEAN... NO. NO
NO!
YOU'RE LYING.
I'M NOT. MY SUIT, IT'S NOT NATURAL. IT'S NOT EVEN ALIVE LIKE THE GOO ALL AROUND US.
IT'S SYNTHETIC. IT'S A PARASITE THAT YOU WERE EXPOSED TO, AND UNLESS WE GET IT OFF...
...IT'S GOING TO KILL YOU!

THEN I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
AND YOU? YOU'RE NOT WORTH IT.
KNULL IS GOING TO MAKE ME A BIGGER DEAL THAN YOU EVER WERE.
I HAVE PLACES TO BE. HOUSES TO ROCK--
PEOPLE TO KILL.
THWIP!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY FROM ME!
MJ! COME BACK HERE!

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #3

WHEN I BECAME GHOST-SPIDER, IT TOOK ME SOME TIME TO ADJUST.
THWIP
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MY POWERS. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO ME.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE TO TEACH ME.
AND WHEN I GOT A NEW SUIT THAT RESPONDS TO MY THOUGHTS, I THOUGHT I KNEW IT ALL.
I STILL NEARLY LOST MYSELF. I HAD TO WORK TO COME BACK TO GHOST-SPIDER.
BUT IF THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME...
...WHAT IS MJ LOSING?

STILL FOLLOWING ME? I GUESS I REALLY AM IRRESISTIBLE.
I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT!
MJ, PLEASE.
YOU REALLY ARE A LITTLE HYPOCRITE, AREN'T YOU?
...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU'RE ONLY HAPPY WHEN YOU'RE THE HERO. WHEN YOU'RE THE ONLY HERO.
YOU KILLED PETER ON PURPOSE, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU JUST COULDN'T LET HIM BE SPECIAL, NOT EVEN FOR A MINUTE. YOU HAD TO BE THE ONLY ONE.
YOU HAD TO WIN.
HE WAS GOING TO KILL HARRY! HE WAS GOING TO HURT YOU! I HAD TO FIGHT HIM--
SURE. KEEP TELLING YOURSELF THAT.

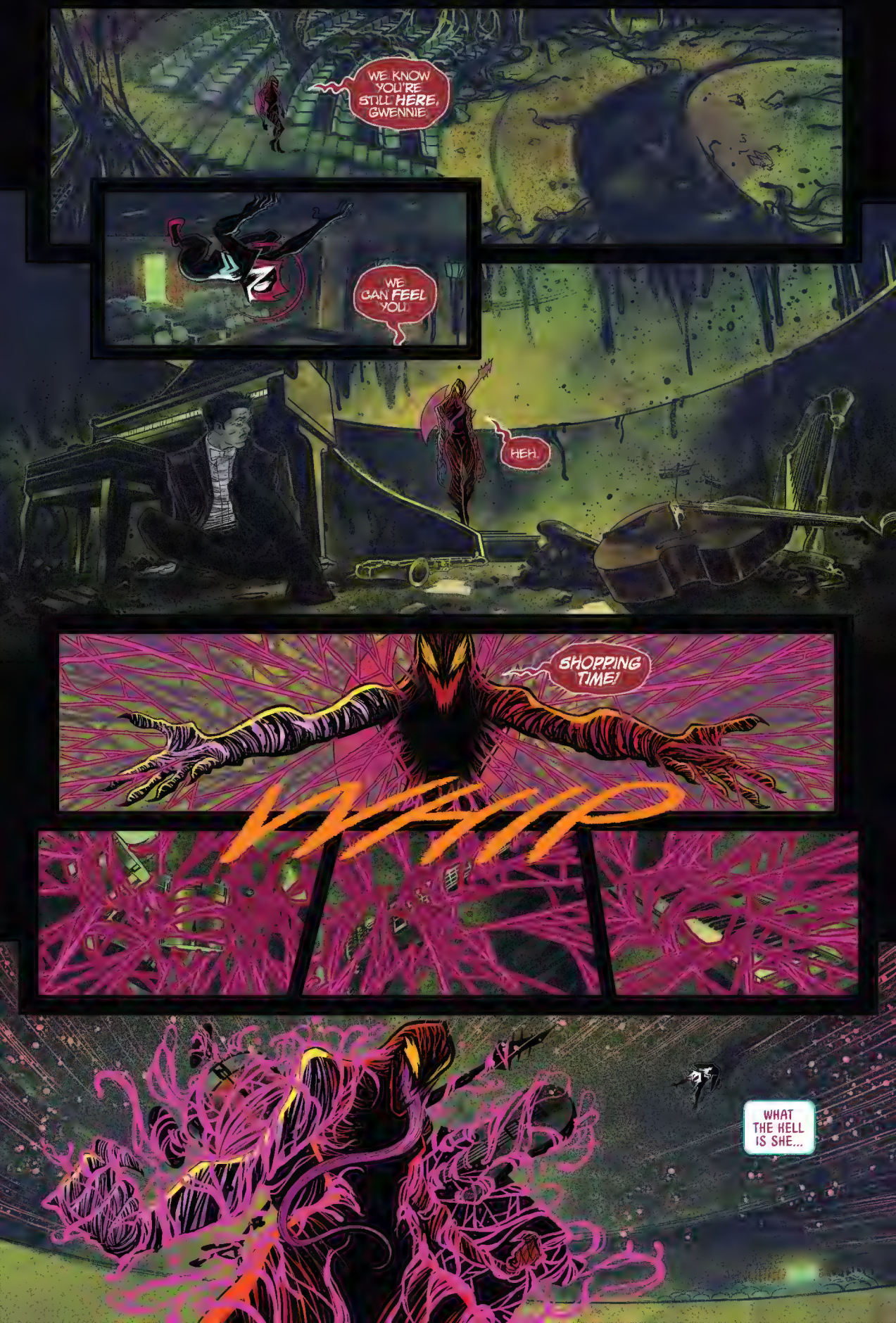
SCREEE!
BYE-BYE, GWENNIE!
HA HA HAHAHA HA HAAAA!
MJ!
HOW DID SHE KNOW THAT DRAGON WAS GOING TO BE THERE? SHE NEVER LOOKED UP.
WHEN I WAS WITH THAT FREAKY KNULL GUY, HE KNEW EVERYTHING SHE WAS THINKING.
HE SAID SHE WAS HIS.

THWIP
THE DRAGONS ARE HIS TOO. I THINK... I THINK HE'S LIKE THAT NAZI BEE GUY, SWARM.
THEY'RE ALL PART OF HIM--THE DRAGONS, MJ.
KNULL WANTS ME, MY SUIT, TO BE A PART OF HIM TOO. THAT'S WHY HE KEPT ASKING WHY I WASN'T HIS.*
*SEE LAST ISH! --DEVIN
WHEN MY COSTUME BONDED TO ME, I GOT A LITTLE OVERWHELMED.
THE SPIDERS THAT MAKE MY SUIT FEEL THINGS SO BIG, AND THEY AMPLIFY THEM INTO THEIR HOSTS.

THAT'S WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MJ. THESE ARE HER FEELINGS, BUT THE SUIT IS MAKING THEM HUGE.
THANKS FOR THE LIFT.
THUD
BUT HER SUIT IS AT LEAST PARTIALLY MINE, NOT KNULL'S. I HAVE TO SAVE HER.
HEY, MJ!
WHAT, YOU AGAIN?
I GUESS YOU NEVER DID LEARN TO DEAL WITH REJECTION.
THIS ISN'T YOU. THIS IS THE SUIT TALKING. THIS IS KNULL TALKING.
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY.
I'VE SEEN THE WAY HE WORKS THROUGH HIS HIVE MIND. YOU'RE ANGRY. YOU'RE NOT EVIL. KNULL IS.

I AM MY SUIT!
WE ARE ETERNAL AND WE ARE GLORIOUS AND WE ARE BETTER THAN YOU!
CRASH
AGH!
I WAS ALWAYS BETTER THAN YOU.
RUN AWAY NOW, GHOST-SPIDER. MAYBE YOU CAN DITCH THIS DIMENSION TOO.
THIS IS KNULL. IT'S NOT MJ.
AND HE KNOWS DAMN WELL THAT I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
SHE HAS A RIGHT TO HER ANGER. I BELIEVE IT'S HER OWN. BUT NOT LIKE THIS.
CRASH
NOT SO SOME GOTH KING FROM SPACE CAN TAKE HER AND MY SUIT.

THWIP
KHUMP
I FEEL IT THE INSTANT I MAKE CONTACT WITH MJ'S WEBS.
KNULL. SCRATCHING AT THE BACK OF MY SKULL.
UHN!
JUST NEED TO GET LOOSE...
RRIP


WE KNOW YOU'RE STILL HERE, GWENNIE
WE CAN FEEL YOU.
HEH.
SHOPPING TIME!
WHAT THE HELL IS SHE...

N-N-NO! N--UG--
THWIP
NO!
SCARED, LITTLE MAN?
MJ, STOP!
TIP
DON'T YOU KNOW HOW TO TAKE A HINT?
LASH
LEAVE THAT MAN ALONE!
WHAT MAN?
I ONLY SEE A SOLDIER.

=GLLLKL=
N-NO!
=GRRRGLGH=
HELP ME!
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT.
DIDN'T I? I WANTED TO DO IT.
SO I DID. THAT SOUNDS NECESSARY TO ME.
MJ, THIS ISN'T YOU. THIS IS KNULL.
I THINK I FINALLY SEE YOUR PROBLEM.
HE GAVE ME WHAT YOU NEVER WOULD. HE GAVE ME POWER. POWER THAT YOU REFUSED TO SHARE.
I CAN'T! MY SUIT--IT WILL KILL YOU IF WE DON'T--
YOU STILL THINK THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.
I'VE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME ON YOU ALREADY. I'M GOING TO MAKE MYSELF A NEW BAND. ONE THAT WON'T EVER RUN AWAY FROM ME AGAIN.

THHHWWWIP
RRRIP
MJ?
MJ!
THHHWWIP
SHE WANTS TO MAKE A NEW BAND? SHE'S GOING TO NEED PEOPLE.
AND SHE'S GOING TO WANT THE BIGGEST VENUE SHE CAN FIND.

...I KNOW WHERE SHE'S GOING.
MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.
HELLO, LITTLE MICE. THE CAT'S BACK. TIME TO STOP YOUR MOUSY GAMES.
KRAMM!!
I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOU. AS LONG AS YOU HELP ME. HERE, MOUSY, MOUSY...
...MOUSY.
CAT'S GOT YOU!

HELLO? IS ANYONE HERE?
HUH. LEAST SHE WAS NICE ENOUGH TO LEAVE A TRAIL.
I JUST HOPE NO ONE ELSE HAS GOTTEN HURT.
YOU CAN'T RUIN THIS GIG. I HAVE A NEW BAND NOW.
SHE CARES MORE ABOUT THE BAND THAN SHE DOES HURTING PEOPLE. SHE'S STILL MJ IN THERE.
MJ...
I CAN STILL SAVE HER.

I KNOW YOU HAVE A NEW BAND! THAT'S WHY I'M HERE!
I WANT TO CHALLENGE YOU!
YOU AND WHAT ARMY?
JUST ME.
PROVE THAT YOU'RE BETTER THAN ME, MJ. PROVE THAT YOU DESERVE THIS MORE THAN I DO.
YOU'VE GOT AN EGO AND A TEMPER, BUT YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON. TAKE ME UP ON IT.
COME ON, MJ!
JUST YOU AGAINST MY WHOLE BAND?
ARE YOU INTO BEING CRUSHED? NEW FETISH?
I WON'T JUST FIGHT YOU... I'LL DESTROY YOU.

SOUND AFFECTS THE SYMBIOTES.
MJ IS PROBABLY THE WORST POSSIBLE HOST, OR, SHE WOULD BE IF SHE WASN'T SO MAD AT ME.
I CAN WORK WITH THIS.
RRRRRP!
SCUSE ME.
BUMP
ONE
TWO
DUN DUN DUN
DUN
THREE
FOUR
BOUM BOUM BOUM
TING
TING TING TING

ALL SYMBIOTES HAVE ISSUES WITH SOUND. AT FIRST, THAT WAS ALL THAT COULD BE USED TO HURT MINE.
BUT MJ'S ISN'T ENTIRELY MINE.
KNULL HAS A HIVE MIND. MY SUIT HAS ALWAYS LISTENED TO ME.
DUN DUN DUN DUN
GET OUT OF HERE, STACY! THIS IS MY BIG MOMENT!
BDUM BDUM BDUM BDUM
DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN DUN
YEAH, IT IS. THIS IS THE MOMENT WHERE YOU COME BACK TO ME.
ONCE THEY'RE NOT IN CONTACT WITH HER ANYMORE, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO...
DUN DUN DUN DUN
GOT 'EM!
OKAY, BABIES, COME ON BACK HOME.
AHHHHHHH
NO! NOOO!!!

OKAY, NEW PLAN.
NEED TO GET CONTROL OF MY SPIDERS AND USE THEM TO PURGE KNULL.
RUN!
COME BACK AND FIGHT ME!
FIGHT YOU? I CAN DO THAT. JUST NOT THE WAY YOU WANT ME TO.
RRRRR!
YOU BELONG TO ME. YOU'RE BONDED TO ME. THAT SYMBIOTE MADE YOU HURT ME.
BABIES... KILL.
YOU DID THIS!

NOT ON PURPOSE!
NOT LEAVING YOU, NOT THE SPIDERS, NONE OF IT!
WE HAVE TO FIX YOU!
I'M PERFECT AS I AM!
IF YOUR SUIT IS ANYTHING LIKE MINE, YOU'RE NOT! IT'S GOING TO KILL YOU!
I CAN LIVE WITH IT BECAUSE I'M RESISTANT TO RADIATION.
YOU'RE NOT. CARNAGE--MJ--PLEASE.

G-GWEN?
I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD...
...=+
YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY, MJ.
YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY.
WHOOO--
--OOON
WHAT?
NO!

NO! NO, NO... MY TELEPORTER NECKLACE IS STILL NOT WORKING. WHY IS IT NOT WORKING?!
KNULL. HE MAY NOT HAVE ME, BUT HE HAD MJ, AND THAT MEANS HE KNOWS MY SUIT NOW.
HE'S NOT LETTING ME GO.
I'M SORRY, MJ. I'M SORRY I HURT YOU. I NEVER MEANT TO.
I'M SORRY I'M ALWAYS LEAVING.
WELL, THIS TIME, YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
I'LL GET YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE UNTIL I FIGURE OUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY NECKLACE, BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M NEEDED ELSEWHERE.
RIGHT NOW, I NEED TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO FIGHT A GOD.

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1

AS HAS BEEN REPORTED ELSEWHERE, I PERSONALLY ASSEMBLED A GROUP OF SUPER-POWERED INDIVIDUALS, EACH WITH A UNIQUE SKILL SET, DESIGNED TO HELP SAVE OUR CITY AND EVEN THE PLANET.
UNDER MY GUIDANCE, THESE MEN AND WOMEN, FORMER CRIMINALS ALL, AGREED TO PUT THEIR PASTS BEHIND THEM AND FIGHT FOR ALL OF OUR FUTURES. THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE THUNDERBOLTS.
ON MY ORDERS, THEY EMBARKED ON A TOP SECRET MISSION. MANY OF YOU WITNESSED THE RESULTS THIS EVENING. THE OUTCOME ISN'T ASSURED JUST YET, BUT IT'S CLEAR THIS WAS THE TURNING POINT OF THIS WAR.
BUT NOW IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART THAT I REPORT THAT THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE SERVICE OF THAT MISSION. THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE DEAD, BUT THEY WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR WHO THEY WERE IN THEIR FINAL MOMENTS. THEY WERE--

--DIRTBAGS, LOWLIFES AND TWO-BIT PIECES OF #@%$ WHO WOULDN'T BE MOURNED BY A SINGLE SOUL IF THEY VANISHED OFF THE GODFORSAKEN PLANET TONIGHT!
A FEW DAYS EARLIER.
STILL DRESSING LIKE ME, MR. FEAR?
I WAS DOING THIS WAY BEFORE YOU, TASKMASTER.
I'M SPEAKING!
YOU'VE ALL BEEN OPERATING IN MY CITY WITHOUT PERMISSION. YOU OWE ME.
BUT I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS. A GIANT ALIEN GOD NAMED KNULL HAS COME HERE TO KILL EVERY LIVING THING, AND IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE HE CAN DO IT.
YOUR DEFINITION OF GOOD NEWS AND MINE ARE A BIT DIFFERENT.
YOU'RE NEW HERE, STAR, SO I'LL FORGIVE THE INTERRUPTION. IT'S GOOD NEWS BECAUSE THIS IS HOW YOU BEGIN TO PAY BACK WHAT YOU OWE.
NOW YOU WORK FOR ME. STOP THIS #$%@, SAVE THE WORLD, BECOME A HERO, PARADES AND ALL THAT... AND I MAKE YOU RICH.
OR?
OR I SEND YOU TO PRISON RIGHT NOW AND WAIT FOR KNULL TO COME KILL YOU IN YOUR CELL.
I WENT ALL THE WAY OUT TO THAT BAR TO GET YOU MYSELF, STAR. DON'T MAKE ME REGRET THAT.

NO OFFENSE, MISTER FISK, SIR. I'M AFRAID OF YOU, SIR. BUT I'M MORE AFRAID OF WHAT I'VE SEEN OUT THERE. I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES IN LOCKUP.
VERY WELL, INCENDIARY. I APPRECIATE YOUR CANDOR.
AFTER SPEAKING WITH MY EXPERTS, YOU ALL WERE SELECTED BECAUSE WE THINK YOUR UNIQUE ABILITIES MIGHT BE ABLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE. BUT I CAN'T *MAKE* YOU DO IT.
GUARDS?
NOW, WHERE WAS I?
ZE MONEY, *MONSIEUR* FISK.
I HAVE A CONSIDERABLE DISCRETIONARY BUDGET FOR EVENTS SUCH AS THESE--
OKAY. SCREW THIS. I'M GONNA CHOOSE LOCKUP TOO. MONEY'S GREAT, BUT HOW AM I GONNA--
BLAM!
OH DEAR. IT SEEMS INCENDIARY TRIED TO ESCAPE CUSTODY. WHAT A SHAME.
AMPERE, YOU WERE SAYING?
I... I--I'M IN. *SIR.*
I'M IN.
QUESTION. HOW ARE *WE* SUPPOSED TO STOP AN ALIEN INVASION?
I HAVE NO IDEA.

BUT YOU'RE GOING TO GO SPEAK WITH THE PERSON WHO MIGHT.
IT'S A FLUID SITUATION OUT THERE, BUT THIS HAS INFORMATION ON HIM AND WHERE HE SHOULD BE. AS WELL AS YOUR GENEROUS SALARY OFFERS, CONTRACTS, AND NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS YOU WILL NEED TO SIGN.
HIM? IS THIS A JOKE?
DO I SEEM LIKE I AM IN A JOVIAL MOOD, TASKMASTER?
I CAN NEVER TELL WITH YOU.
HEY. I KNOW EVERYONE HERE...EXCEPT HER. WHO'S SHE?
THE NAME IS STAR--
IF ANY OF YOU STAND EVEN A CHANCE OF STOPPING THIS THING, IT'S HER.
CORRECT.
SO SHE'S A HEAVY?
THEN WHY ARE WE HERE?
YOUR JOB, MISTER FEAR, IS TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO MAKE CERTAIN STAR DOESN'T DIE BEFORE SHE GETS A CHANCE TO KILL THIS KNULL CREATURE.
NOW, I APOLOGIZE IF I GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE WOULD BE A QUESTION AND ANSWER PORTION OF MY SPEECH. BUT IF YOU'RE ALL DONE, THERE IS JUST ONE MORE THING. I MADE A LAW, NO MASKED VIGILANTES.
YOU WORK FOR ME, YOU DON'T HIDE.
SHOW YOUR FACES.
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR DAMN MIND... UMM...SIR?
NO.
ABSOLUTELY NOT.

"YOU REPRESENT ME OUT THERE. THAT MEANS YOU LOOK AND ACT THE PART. SO WHATEVER STUPID IDEAS YOU HAVE ABOUT AN EASY PAYDAY, BANISH THOSE AS WELL. IT'S TIME TO GROW UP, GENTLEMEN. CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING FOR ONCE IN YOUR MISERABLE LIVES."
"IF WE'RE HEROES NOW, WE GOT A TEAM NAME, MISTER FISK?"
"YOU ARE THE THUNDERBOLTS."
"ARE YOU @#$%#@% SERIOUS?"
"IT IS A RESPECTED NAME WITH A LONG LEGACY, TASKMASTER."
"WASN'T IT ORIGINALLY A SCAM STARTED BY A NAZI PRETENDING HE WAS A GOOD GUY SO HE COULD TAKE OVER THE WORLD?"
"MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT IS A NAME I OWN THE COPYRIGHT TO."
WE NEED A BETTER NAME. WE'RE FINALLY HEROES, RIGHT? REPRESENTING JUSTICE AND HOPE OR SOME @#$%?
WE SHOULD CALL OURSELVES THE HOPE LEAGUE!

CREEPY'S RIGHT. LIGHTNING BOLTS ARE A THING. THUNDERCLAPS ARE A THING. BUT THUNDERBOLTS DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE. WHAT IS--
?
CHUNK!
WHAT IS THAT?!
THUNDERBOLTS! SPREAD OUT!

KEEP MOVING. DON'T LET IT GET CLOSE. THIS THING MUST HAVE A WEAK SPOT.
WHY MUST IT?
HOW'S SNAKEHEAD?
VERY DEAD.

HUP!
WATCH OU--
I CAN'T GET A CLEAR SHOT!
SOMEONE GET IT OFF BALANCE.
HOW?
$%6?#!@ AMATEURS.
HHSSSSSSSS!!!

THAT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION ABOUT WHY I'M HERE?
YEAH, PRETTY MUCH.
GOOD. THEN...
...WE SHOULD...
EASY, MADAME. PERHAPS THAT WAS TOO MUCH, NO?
BIG BLAST... JUST NEED A SECOND...
SNAKEHEAD'S DEAD AND OUR BIG GUN JUST FAINTED. I'M OUT.
IF WE'RE DOING THIS, WE'RE GONNA NEED ALL THE POWER WE CAN GET.
THEN I GUESS WE AREN'T DOING IT.
IF THE WORLD DOESN'T END, FISK CAN DEAL WITH ME WHEN HE FINDS ME.
ACK--!!
I'LL SAVE HIM THE TROUBLE, COWARD.

MISTER FEAR!
WHAT? YOU SAID WE'RE GONNA NEED ALL OF OUR POWERS.
I DO NOT THINK THE MAN WITH THE HAIRCUT WILL BE USING HIS POWERS TO AID US NOW, MON FRÈRE.
JUST BECAUSE HE AIN'T USING 'EM DOESN'T MEAN WE CAN'T.
FINE.
WE GOT A JOB TO DO, AND WE'RE DOING IT AS A TEAM. NOBODY ELSE LEAVES, OR THEY DEAL WITH ME.
I'M LEAVING.
HEY! SURE, BIG GUY. I DIDN'T MEAN YOU.
I THOUGHT WE NEEDED EVERYONE?
I'M PLAYING THE ODDS THAT GETTING EATEN BY ONE OF THOSE DRAGONS IS QUICKER THAN HAVING HIM STOMP ME TO DEATH.
AU REVOIR, HIPPOPOTAMUS.

IF AMPERE'S ELECTRIC POWERS WORK ON THESE THINGS, I FIGURE YOU ALL COULD USE THESE.
I DO NOT KNOW HOW TO WORK THIS--HOW DO YOU SAY... GADGET?
"GADGET."
AMPERE WASN'T THE BRIGHTEST BULB. IF HE CAN WORK IT, SO CAN YOU.
NICE. WHAT ABOUT YOU?
I'LL STICK WITH MY OWN GEAR.
WHAT NOW?
WELL, SMAUG OVER THERE ATE OUR TELEPORTER, SO I GUESS WE'RE WALKING.
IT'S ACROSS THE RIVER.
THEN WE'LL TAKE A BOAT. WE DON'T HAVE TO ACT LIKE EVERYTHING IS DIFFICULT.
SHOULDN'T WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE BODIES?
WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS NOW. SOMEBODY WILL CLEAN THOSE UP FOR US.
GOOD GUYS STEAL BOATS?
NO. WE COMMANDEER THEM.

SO YOU KNOW THIS GUY, RIGHT?
YEAH. I KNOW HIM.
YOU THINK HE'S GOING TO KNOW HOW TO STOP ALL THIS? HE'S DONE IT BEFORE, RIGHT?
IT'S NOT WHETHER HE KNOWS HOW TO STOP IT. IT'S WHETHER HE CARES--
KRASH!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?
I'M COMMANDEERING IT.
DROP IT.
WHO DIED AND MADE YOU CAPTAIN AMERICA?
HALF THE TEAM.
LOOK AROUND. THE WORLD'S ENDING. NOBODY'S COMING AFTER US IF WE GRAB SOME STUFF TO SELL ON THE WAY.
SELL TO WHO, GENIUS?
BOTH OF YOU, SHUT UP. LISTEN.
WHAT AM I--
SOMETHING'S GOING ON UP AHEAD.
WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE?
NOT GOOD.

THESE THINGS DON'T STOP COMING. JESS, YOU SHOULD GET OUT OF HERE.
I CAN HANDLE MYSELF. IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED, WHY DON'T *YOU* TAKE OFF?
HEY, CAN *I* GO?
SHOULDN'T WE HELP THEM? WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE NOW.
...YEAH.
YOU'RE SERIOUSLY GONNA RISK YOUR LIFE FOR *THOSE THREE JOKERS?* THEY'D LOCK EVERY ONE OF US UP OR PUT US IN THE GROUND IF THEY GOT THE CHANCE.
MISTER FEAR'S RIGHT.
WE GO AROUND.

WE'RE SERIOUSLY NOT GOING TO HELP THEM?
THEY HAVE THEIR MISSION, AND WE HAVE OURS. I'M NOT JEOPARDIZING IT FOR THEM.
THEY COULD HELP US.
LET IT GO, BLONDIE. @#$% THEM.
PARDON THE INTERRUPTION OF YOUR LOVERS' QUARREL, BUT WE HAVE COMPANY.
UGGH. IT'S LIKE A DRIPPY SPIDER-MAN. WHAT DO WE DO?
IT IS NOT BOTHERING US. PERHAPS WE LIVE AND LET LIVE?
I HAVE CHANGED MY MIND.
OOOF!

THERE IS A MAN INSIDE THERE.
YEAH, IT'S LIKE VENOM.
THERE IS A MAN INSIDE VENOM?!
THEY'RE SYMBIOTES. VENOM CAME TO EARTH DISGUISED AS SPIDER-MAN'S OLD COSTUME, BUT NOW HE LIVES ON SOME BRO NAMED EDDIE.
VENOM IS THE SPIDER-MAN'S LAUNDRY?!
HEY, GUYS? LOOK!
IT'S AMPERE?!
FIRST TIME I'VE EVER KILLED THE SAME GUY TWICE.
I KILLED HIM THIS TIME.
OKAY. THIS IS BAD. NEW RULE. DON'T LET THE GOOP TOUCH YOU.
AT ALL.
WE'RE TWO BLOCKS FROM THE PIER. LET'S GET GOING BEFORE ANY...MORE...
TOO LATE.
THUNDERBOLTS...

...RUN!
THEY'RE GAINING!
HA! BATROC CAN SLOW THEM DOWN!
BATROC! DAMMIT!
HE'S ON HIS OWN NOW.
Wall Street Ferry 71
MATT.R
WE'LL TAKE THIS ONE.

YOU KNOW HOW TO HOT-WIRE THIS THING?

NO, BUT I'M A FAST LEARNER. GO HELP FEAR.

WE GOTTA GO!

GOT IT! WE'RE GOING.

CUT!

WHERE'S BATROC?

I'M GOING BACK FOR HIM.

NO. HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS DOING.

BATROC HAS RETURNED. DO NOT ALL THANK ME AT ONCE.

AH, AMERICAN HOSPITALITY.

DID THEY TOUCH YOU?

NON.

BATROC DOES NOT GET TOUCHED UNLESS HE DESIRES IT.

GROSS.

WE SURE THESE THINGS DON'T SWIM?

DOESN'T MATTER...

"...WE'LL BE THERE IN A MINUTE."
WE SURE ANYONE'S HOME?
FISK WOULDN'T LET THEM EVACUATE. THEY'RE HERE.
HOW CONVENIENT.
NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE GOING HERE.
ON PURPOSE. I MEANT ON PURPOSE.
HOW DO WE FIND OUR MAN?
LOOK! I DIDN'T SIGN UP TO LEAD THIS DAMN SUICIDE MISSION.
HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW HOW TO FIND THIS PSYCHO--

UM. HI. WE'RE THE THUNDERBOLTS. WE'RE HERE TO RESCUE YOU.
THANK GOODNESS. YOU MADE IT. I WAS WORRIED.
THAT'S NORMAN OSBORN? THE GUY WHO'S GONNA SAVE THE WORLD?
HONESTLY, I THOUGHT HE'D BE SCARIER. LIKE, A LOT SCARIER.
WELL, TEAM--
--WE'RE ALL DEAD.

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2

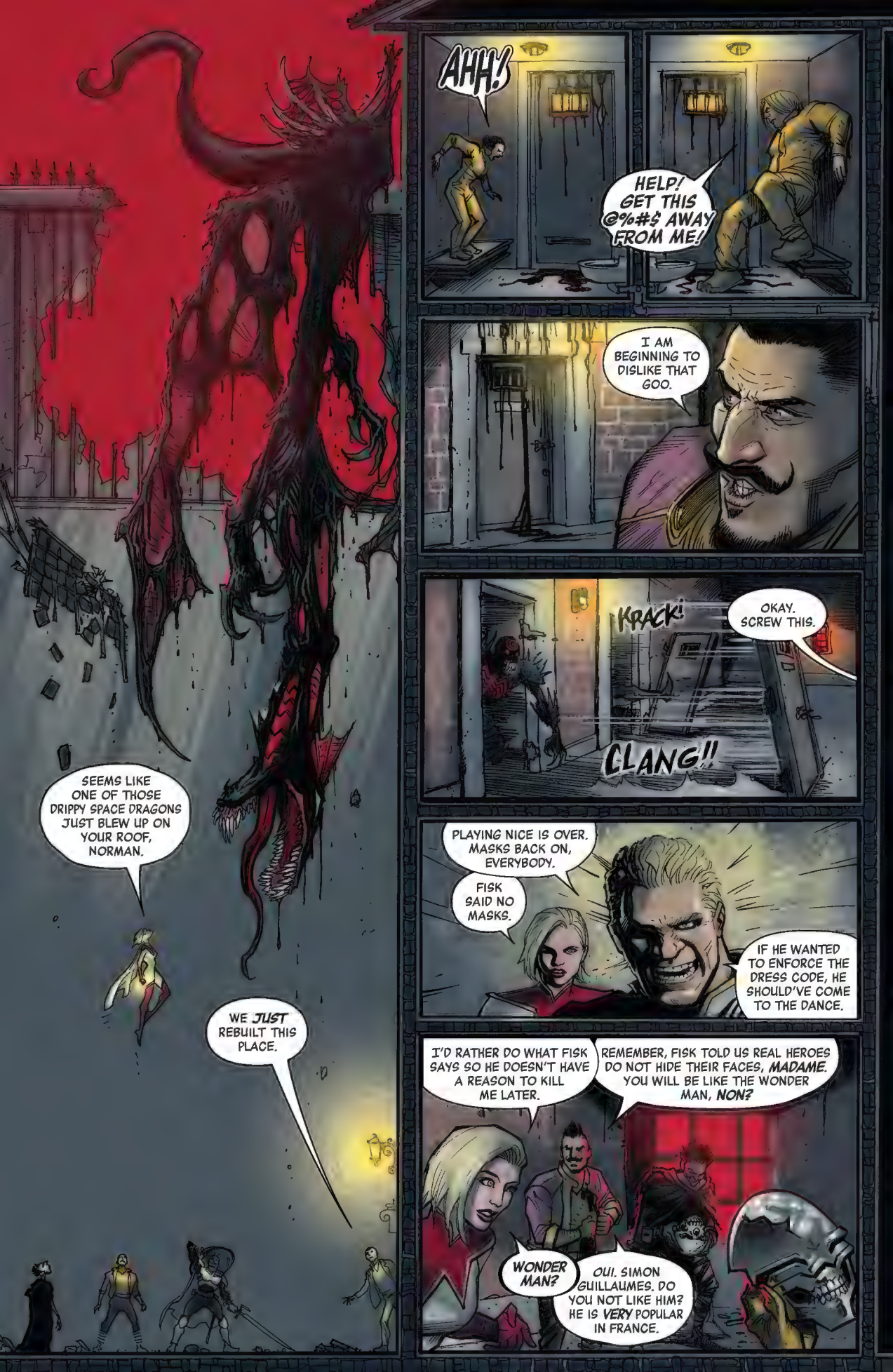
HAVEN'T MISSED THIS PLACE.
I'D SUGGEST WE GRAB SOME OF THESE INMATES TO REPLACE ALL OUR DEAD TEAMMATES...
...BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO HALF THESE GUYS ARE. INQUISITION? THROATPUNCHER? THE NIGHT SCRUBBER?
LET ME OUT!
BUSHMAN
MAN-BULL
HEY, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? YOU'RE NOT YOUR USUAL PSYCHOTIC SELF.
I'M JUST TRYING TO BE OF SOME HELP TO YOU, ANTHONY.
...WHATEVER YOU SAY, NORM.

WHEN MR. FISK TOLD ME HE WAS SENDING A RESCUE, I WAS EXPECTING SOMEONE...
LESS ATTRACTIVE?
CAPABLE.
SO YOU SPOKE TO HIM? THE FAT MAN SAID YOU'D HAVE A PLAN FOR--
=AHEM=
YES, WE SPOKE.
OH, HEY, FISK. YOU KNOW, WHEN I SAID "FAT MAN," I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE BLOB--
IS TASKMASTER DEAD?
NO, BOSS.
GOOD. HIT MISTER FEAR.
YES, BOSS.
CRACK

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE US TO DO, WILSON?
GAH! DON'T GET THAT CLOSE TO A CAMERA EVER AGAIN, NORMAN. START WITH THAT.
AND PUT TASKMASTER BACK ON.
I DON'T THINK I NEED TO TELL YOU THAT THE MOUTH-BREATHING IDIOTS ON YOUR TEAM ARE IN WAY OVER THEIR FEEBLE HEADS.
YEAH...UMM... THEY'RE ALL IN THE ROOM. THEY CAN HEAR YOU.
GOOD!
IDIOTS? THROUGH SOME MIRACLE, TASKMASTER IS STILL ALIVE. HE WILL BE RUNNING THIS OPERATION, AND YOU WILL GIVE HIM WHATEVER SUPPORT HE NEEDS.
TASKMASTER, CLEAR THE ROOM EXCEPT FOR NORMAN.
YOU HEARD THE MAN. EVERYONE WHO DOESN'T DRESS UP LIKE A GOBLIN GET THE HELL OUT.
GOOD CHAT, BOSS.
WE'RE NOT DEAD, BY THE WAY. THANKS FOR ASKING.
I AM BEGINNING TO THINK I SHOULD HAVE GONE WITH ZE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

I THOUGHT NORMAN OSBORN WAS GOING TO BE...CRAZIER. THIS IS PRETTY DISAPPOINTING.
HE IS ALWAYS FULL OF SURPRISES, THAT ONE.
FIGMENT? THAT YOU?
FIGMENT
I KNOW YOU?
REALLY?! I SLEPT ON YOUR COUCH FOR TWO MONTHS.
MISTER FEAR? I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE YOUR...ACTUAL FACE. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WE'RE THE THUNDERBOLTS. ME, TASKMASTER, BATROC, NEW CHICK.
WHY AREN'T YOU WEARING YOUR MASK?
SOME $#@% ABOVE MY PAY GRADE THOUGHT WE'D LOOK BETTER LIKE THIS.
YOU DON'T.
NO $#@%.
YOU RUNNING THE SHOW?
CAN YOU GET ME OUT OF HERE?
MOSTLY.
FIGMENT
HEY, FRENCHIE, THINK IT WOULD BE OKAY IF I LET FIGMENT OUT? SHE COULD JOIN THE TEAM.
GRIZZLY
NON.
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE OUR TEAM ALREADY HAS ITS IDIOT.
YOU TALKING ABOUT ME?
IF ONE MUST ASK IF ONE IS THE IDIOT...
WE GOT A PROBLEM HERE?
WHAT...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I AM FIGURING OUT, IF I WERE TO KILL YOU RIGHT NOW, HOW MOST I WOULD LIKE TO DO IT.
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE YOUR SHOT--

I WOULD MOST LIKELY COLLAPSE YOUR TRACHEA AND LET YOU DROWN IN YOUR OWN BLOOD LIKE A SLAUGHTERED PIG. UNLESS MADAME RYAN CHOSE TO SAVE YOU.
PASS.
TRAGIC, NON?
ACK!
BOOOM!!!
WHAT DID YOU IDIOTS DO?!
I DON'T THINK THIS WAS US.


AHH!
HELP! GET THIS @%#$ AWAY FROM ME!
I AM BEGINNING TO DISLIKE THAT GOO.
KRACK!
OKAY. SCREW THIS.
CLANG!!
PLAYING NICE IS OVER. MASKS BACK ON, EVERYBODY.
FISK SAID NO MASKS.
IF HE WANTED TO ENFORCE THE DRESS CODE, HE SHOULD'VE COME TO THE DANCE.
I'D RATHER DO WHAT FISK SAYS SO HE DOESN'T HAVE A REASON TO KILL ME LATER.
REMEMBER, FISK TOLD US REAL HEROES DO NOT HIDE THEIR FACES, MADAME. YOU WILL BE LIKE THE WONDER MAN, NON?
WONDER MAN?
OUI. SIMON GUILLAUMES. DO YOU NOT LIKE HIM? HE IS VERY POPULAR IN FRANCE.
SEEMS LIKE ONE OF THOSE DRIPPY SPACE DRAGONS JUST BLEW UP ON YOUR ROOF, NORMAN.
WE JUST REBUILT THIS PLACE.

YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO GET OUT THE OLD RAGS AND JOIN US HERE, NORM?
NO. I HAVE TO GO MAKE SURE THE REST OF THE FACILITY IS SECURE.
SURE YOU DO. MORE FOR US, I GUESS...
THUNDERBOLTS, STRIKE!
THAT'S MY LINE.

HEY, REMEMBER WHEN I SAID WE SHOULD RECRUIT SOME OF THESE GUYS, AND YOU ALL ACTED LIKE IT WAS THE DUMBEST IDEA YOU'D EVER HEARD?

KNULL DIDN'T THINK IT WAS.

THE EVIL GOTHIC SPACEMAN AGREES WITH YOU. YOU MUST BE VERY PROUD.

HEADS UP, TASKMASTER! BIG GUY COMING YOUR WAY.
WHO THE HELL IS HE ANYWAY?
THIS IS THE NIGHT SCRUBBER.
BATROC, HE'S ALL YOURS.
THE NIGHT SCRUBBER, EH? MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN THE NAME WOULD SUGGEST. PERHAPS HE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER WITH A MORE SCARIER NAME.
STAR!
THIS COMING FROM A GUY NAMED "THE LEAPER."

I DO NOT THINK A WOMAN NOBODY HAS HEARD OF, WHO NAMED HERSELF "STAR," IS IN A POSITION TO MOCK.
SWK!
EVERYBODY SHUT UP.
WE'RE LEAVING NOW. HEAD FOR THE GARAGE. MISTER FEAR IS ON POINT.
HELP US!
WHAT ABOUT THEM?
WHAT ABOUT THEM?
THEY DIE IF WE LEAVE THEM HERE.
ARE YOU $%£%#@$ WITH ME RIGHT NOW?
THEY'RE PSYCHOS. AND WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.
YEAH. SAVE PEOPLE.
NOT THESE PEOPLE...
FINE. BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THIS LATER, RILEY. COUNT ON THAT.
THIS IS VERY ADMIRABLE OF YOU.
THANK YOU.
YOU HAVE PERHAPS KILLED US ALL, BUT IT WILL BE AN ADMIRABLE DEATH.
OKAY, DIRTBAGS AND CRAZIES! YOU'VE JUST BEEN SAVED BY YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD THUNDERBOLTS.
FOLLOW MISTER FEAR. AND DON'T GET ANY IDEAS ABOUT ATTACKING US. YOU NEED US A LOT MORE THAN WE NEED YOU.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
ANYWHERE BUT HERE.

SNIFF
SNIFF
HISSSSS
ZIS IS ZE WORST JOB I HAVE EVER HAD.
MENCROFT

SO THAT'S OUR PLAN?
...NO.
THAT'S WHAT NORMAN'S BIG BRAIN CAME UP WITH. YOU GOT BETTER?
CAN YOU FIND HIM?
HE SHOULD BE GIVING OFF TREMENDOUS ENERGY. REACH OUT WITH YOUR POWERS. LET IT FLOW THROUGH YOU.
I'VE NEVER TRIED TO DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
ARE YOU JUST QUOTING STAR WARS?
NO...
OKAY, YES. SORRY IF I DON'T KNOW HOW THE MAGIC ROCK THAT GAVE YOU POWERS WORKS.
NO, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT'S BASICALLY STAR WARS.
AND WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T FIND HIM?
I DON'T KNOW. WE ALL DIE. THE WORLD ENDS. STUFF LIKE THAT.
WE GOOD TO GO?
I GUESS?
GREAT. GOOD LUCK!
AAAAA!
@$%#@%&!

WONDERFUL THAT SHE BELIEVED THAT--
DON'T CARE.
IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND TAKING THESE POWER DAMPENERS OFF--
DON'T CARE.
DID YOU JUST THROW MADAME OUT OF THE VEHICLE?
SUPER. DO WE HAVE A PLAN NOW?
YES.
"NORMAL NORM CAME UP WITH... SOMETHING."
"DO YOU THINK IT WILL WORK, MON AMI?"
"GUY HAS HAD HIS BUTT KICKED BY SPIDER-MAN A FEW HUNDRED TIMES.
"HE WOULDN'T BE MY FIRST CHOICE FOR WINNING PLANS.
C'MON, STUPID POWERS. WORK. WORK.
"BUT IT'S WHAT WE GOT."
=GASP=

PERHAPS WE SHOULD SIMPLY RUN?
RUN WHERE? THE WHOLE WORLD IS GONNA FALL TO THIS PIECE OF...
WHY ARE WE GOING SO SLOW?
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO DRIVE OUR BUS? MONSIEUR FEAR DRIVES LIKE UNE VIEILLE FILLE FROM NORD-PAS-DE-CALAIS.
THAT'S... I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?
BAD. HE DRIVES BAD.
RAVENCROF
ARE YOU GOING THE @#$%@#& SPEED LIMIT, FEAR?
I'M CRAZY, NOT SUICIDAL. THE SPEED LIMIT IS THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED SPEED. FOR LARGER VEHICLES, IT'S SUGGESTED TO DRIVE BELOW THAT--
THE WORLD IS ENDING, AND YOU'RE GOING 45 IN A 55?!
LA VACHE!
GIMME!
LET GO!
"WHAT'S 'LA VACHE'?"
"BRAKE!"

BRAAAAKE!!!
AHHHHHH!

AHH
HH!

AHHH!

I AM NO EXPERT, BUT SHOULD WE NOT BE FALLING FASTER THAN THIS?

AHHH--

SHUT UP.

HEY, BLOND CHICK CAUGHT THE BUS!

GOOD JOB, BLOND CHICK.

DON'T... TALK TO ME... NOW...

CAN I JUST SAY THAT YOU LOOK SERIOUSLY GOOD RIGHT NOW?
VERY... HEAVY... NEED TO CONCENTRATE... @#$& OFF...
I'M JUST SAYIN'. AFTER WE SAVE THE WORLD, YOU AND ME COULD MAYBE--
THE LADY ASKED YOU TO SHUT THE @$%& UP.
SLAM
BRAVO, MADAME. SEE? YOU ARE ALREADY ACTING LIKE THE WONDER MAN. BUT A WOMAN...
WONDER LADY.
I THINK... I THINK I FOUND HIM...
YOU NEED TO CATCH YOUR BREATH?
...MAYBE, YEAH.
YOU CAN DO THAT LATER. LET'S GO. YOU LEAD THE WAY.

JONES BEACH
"NOT GREAT BEACH WEATHER."
YOU STAY, FIGMENT.
WHAT IF MORE OF THOSE THINGS COME?
THAT WOULD SUCK, HUH?
IT FEELS LIKE THERE IS ENERGY UP AHEAD. IT MIGHT BE HIM...I'M NOT SURE.
SOMEONE WANT TO TELL ME WHO WE'RE LOOKING FOR?
HIM.
IS THAT...
PULL HIM OUT.
YOU THINK YOU CAN CONVINCE HIM TO HELP US?
DON'T NEED TO...
THE SENTRY?!

BECAUSE KNULL RIPPED HIM IN HALF.
AWW, C'MON, MAN. YOU CAN'T WARN A BROTHER?
WE ARE SO @#%$#&.
I DO NOT THINK HE IS GOING TO BE VERY MUCH HELP FOR US IN A FIGHT ANYMORE.
WE DON'T NEED HIM TO FIGHT. WE'RE JUST GOING TO BLOW HIM UP AND TAKE OUT THE BAD GUY.
GUY'S GOT A LOT OF ENERGY INSIDE HIM STILL. THAT'S GONNA BE AN AWFULLY BIG EXPLOSION.
HOW ARE WE GOING TO SURVIVE THAT?

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1 VARIANT BY
RON LIM & ISRAEL SILVA

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1 VARIANT BY
BERNARD CHANG

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2 VARIANT BY
MARCO CHECCHETTO

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #3 VARIANT BY
RIAN GONZALES

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #3

...AND I SAY, "IT'S JUST AN OLD MAN IN A BIRD COSTUME."
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? THE FRENCH HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMOR.
I GET IT. BUT IT SUCKS.
YOU SUCK.
THIS IS BORING. I GOT $5,000 SAYS SHE CAN'T FIND HIM.
DEAL.
DEAL.
CRAB CRUNCH!!!
=GASP=
#$@%.

THIS IS THE GROSSEST THING ANYONE HAS EVER ASKED ME TO DO. EVER.
I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT.
MERCI.
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE GOING TO FIGHT THE GUY WHO DID THIS TO THE SENTRY. THE SENTRY, PEOPLE.
SO GROSS.
AND OUR SOLE PLAN OF ATTACK IS BASED ON THE FILM WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S?
WE'RE USING HIM AS A BOMB, NOT MAKING HIM DANCE.
NON. THAT WAS WEEKEND AT BERNIE'S 2. ALSO, THAT FILM IS... NOT GOOD, MY FRIEND.
FISK PUT US TOGETHER FOR THIS?! THE WHOLE SQUAD... IT'S SUICIDE...
WE'RE A SUICIDE TEAM.
IS ANYONE GOING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT HOW UNBELIEVABLY GROSS THIS IS?
GAS

WERE THE SUSPENDERS REALLY NECESSARY?
SUSPENDERS ARE TOO MUCH? DEADBOY IS ALREADY WEARING A FRIGGIN' CAPE...
...OH, NO OFFENSE.
EXCUSE ME, MAY I ASK A QUESTION?
NO.
NOW THAT WE'VE ACQUIRED A FRESH CORPSE FOR... REASONS, I'M SURE...
...I WAS WONDERING WHY IT SEEMS LIKE WE'RE DRIVING BACK TOWARD THE CITY WE ALL ALMOST PERISHED IN.
THAT'S AN EXCELLENT QUESTION, HYDE. WHY DON'T YOU USE YOUR LITTLE EYES AND LOOK UP THERE.
SEE THAT EVIL ORB FLOATING IN THE SKY? THAT'S KNULL'S HOUSE.
SO WE'RE GOING TO BLOW IT UP. NOW SIT BACK DOWN.

WHERE ARE WE HEADED, MON MAITRE DES TÂCHES?
MIDTOWN. BUT WE'LL TAKE THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE.
I AM NOT SURE WE WILL MAKE IT, N'EST-CE PAS?
RAVENCROFT
WHY ARE WE SLOWING DOWN?!
THE BUS, SHE IS MORTE, MA PETITE ÉTOILE.
SHE IS LIKE GUIDING A DRUNKEN WHALE THROUGH PUDDING, NON?
OKAY, THUNDERBOLTS. WE'RE GOING THE REST OF THE WAY ON FOOT.
WE'LL GET TORN APART.
WE'LL GO FAST.
YOU FORGET ABOUT OUR NEW, VERY SLEEPY TEAMMATE?
LA VACHE!
WHAT ABOUT THEM? REMEMBER THE PEOPLE WE RESCUED?
THEY CAN STAY ON THE BUS.
THEY'LL DIE.
THEY WERE GOING TO DIE ANYWAY. AT LEAST WE TOOK THEM ON A NICE TRIP TO THE BEACH.
WHERE YOU MADE THEM STAY ON THE BUS.
YOU NEED MY HANDS FREE. BATROC AND THE CREEP ARE USELESS IF THEY CAN'T MOVE QUICKLY. I'M GUESSING YOU DON'T WANT TO CARRY OUR LITTLE BLOND BOMB. LET THEM HELP.
THEY DESERVE A CHANCE TO FIGHT BACK, THE SAME AS THE REST OF US, RIGHT?

FIGMENT, FOOLKILLER, MAN-BULL, MR. HYDE, GRIZZLY. GUESS WHAT? ALL YOU @#$%&@#$ ARE NOW HONORARY THUNDERBOLTS. CONGRATULATIONS.
I WAS ALREADY A THUNDERBOLT.
GREAT. LET'S GO.
WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BE A THUNDERBOLT?
LAST GUY WHO SAID THAT, WE KILLED... TWICE.
YOU KNOW WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT TO MANHATTAN, RIGHT?
YOU KNOW THAT IF WE DON'T, YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE OFF WITH THE GOLDEN BOY WHERE WE FALL, RIGHT?
WE'LL MAKE IT.
THOUGHT SO.

AHHH!
THEY GOT FOOLKILLER!
I WILL--
I'LL GET HIM. YOU KEEP GOING. DON'T STOP FOR ANYONE NOW.
RRRAAAHHHH!
WELL, DAMN. I GUESS THIS IS WHY WE DON'T GO BACK FOR--
OOF!

I'M ASSUMING... YOU USED TO BE... HNNN...A PERSON UNDER THERE...
SORRY TO WHOEVER YOU WERE.
TEN ON ONE? I ALWAYS KNEW VENOM SUCKED.
I HOPE I GIVE YOU INDIGESTION, YOU MISERABLE PIECE OF--
SHOOO

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK FOR ME.

I VOTED AGAINST IT.

WE'RE THUNDERBOLTS. #@$% EVERYONE ELSE.

THIS IS WHY.

EVERYONE GET DOWN!

KA-WOOOSH!!!

WHAT. THE. &@%#. WAS. THAT?!

I DID NOT KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT, MADAME.

NEITHER DID I.

SHE'S TERRIFYING.

WELL, THAT GOT THEIR ATTENTION. WE GOTTA GO.

YOU STILL UP FOR THIS?

GIVE ME A FEW DAYS AND I'LL BE GOOD AS NEW.

HAVING OUR "*BIG GUN*" PASS OUT ALL THE TIME IS A FUN TWIST.

GET @#%$&%, SWORDBOY.

HOW IS THIS SUPPOSED TO WORK AGAIN?

YOU KNOW HOW THEY SAY THE SENTRY HAS THE *POWER OF A THOUSAND EXPLODING SUNS*, RIGHT?

YOU KNOW THAT WAS GIBBERISH, RIGHT?

SURE. BUT OSBORN SAID THE ENERGY IS STILL STORED IN HIS BODY. IT'S A WAVELENGTH OF PURE LIGHT. YOU CAN TRIGGER IT WITH A BLAST OF YOUR POWER, AND IT WON'T HURT YOU BUT MIGHT KILL KNULL.

I'M OKAY, I'M OKAY.

IF SENTRY HAD THE POWER TO KILL KNULL, WHY DIDN'T HE?

PROBABLY BECAUSE IT INVOLVED BLOWING HIMSELF UP, WHICH HE WASN'T INTO, I GUESS.

YOU TRUST OSBORN?

OF COURSE NOT. HE'S A TRUE PSYCHOPATH. BUT HE *HAD* A SYMBIOTE, AND HE STILL *IS* ONE OF THE BEST SCIENTIFIC MINDS ON THE PLANET.

YOU GOT TO BE REAL SMART TO TURN YOURSELF INTO A GOBLIN.

WE CAN'T GET THROUGH THAT.

DOGMAN IS CORRECT.

IT'S GRIZZLY. WE WORKED TOGETHER ON--

WE MUST GO BACK AND FIND ANOTHER WAY.

WHAT'S PLAN B?

THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT UP THERE FROM HERE?
THOSE THINGS ARE FASTER THAN ME EVEN WITHOUT 200 POUNDS OF DEAD AVENGER ON MY BACK. AND THEY'LL SEE ME COMING. I'D NEED TO GET MUCH CLOSER.
BEST WE CAN DO IS A LITTLE CLOSER.
KRAK!
THUNDERBOLTS, GET IN THERE! GET HER TO THE TOP OF THE BRIDGE.
YOU'RE NOT COMING?
SOMEONE HAS TO STAY DOWN HERE AND TRY TO HOLD THEM BACK. I'LL BUY YOU TIME.
GOOD LUCK, THUNDERBOLTS.
GOOD LUCK, TONY.

SORRY, LADY. I DON'T BELIEVE IN LUCK.
FISK? IT'S TASKMASTER.
HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ME, MASTERS.
THEY'RE GOING TO DO IT NOW.
I'M HEADING OUT. YOU HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ME?
THE MONEY IS IN YOUR ACCOUNT. AND I TRUST THAT I WILL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN?
AS LONG AS THE MONEY IS THERE, NOBODY WILL.
YOU'RE GOING TO NEED A NEW BRIDGE, BY THE WAY.
THAT'S FINE.
ANY CHANCE THIS ACTUALLY WORKS?
DOUBTFUL. BUT IF SOMEONE DOES KILL KNULL AFTER THIS, I NEED TO BE ABLE TO SHOW THAT I HAD SOME HAND IN IT.
"REAL HEROIC, WILLY."
"DON'T SOUND SO SAD, MASTERS."
"I'M FINE. I GOT YOU YOUR MARTYRS."
AND I GOT YOU YOUR MONEY. #@$% EVERYONE ELSE, RIGHT?

THAT WAS =HUFF= A LOT 'A STAIRS. NEXT TIME =HUFFF= LET'S ONLY DO THIS =HUFF= IF THERE'S AN ELEVATOR.

YOU HAVE THIS, *MON AMIE?*

I DON'T KNOW.

I AM AFRAID THAT IS NOT AN OPTION.

WHATEVER YOU'RE GOING TO DO, DO IT.

WE CAN'T HOLD THEM MUCH LONGER!

REMIND ME TO HAVE A WORD WITH TASKMASTER ABOUT WHAT *"HOLD THEM OFF"* MEANS WHEN WE GO BACK DOWN.

OH, I'M SURE HE'S ALREADY LONG GONE, SWEETHEART. I WOULD BE.

WELL... WISH ME LUCK.

NO.

FAIR ENOUGH.

SNAP!!

WE EVER COME UP WITH A PLAN TO GET *DOWN* FROM HERE?

NON.

THEY'RE COMING THROUGH. GET READY!

WHAT THE--?!

SHUNK!

STOP HER! STOP RIPLEY!
STAR!
WHO THE HELL IS *RIPLEY?!*
SHE'S GONE, MAN. SHE'S GOING TO BLOW UP KNULL *IF* SHE CAN EVER GET CLOSE.
THE BLAST WILL KILL HER--
AWW SHUCKS.
AND ALL OF US!
OH.
WHOOSH!
$#@£. %$#£@%. @#$%.
DOGMAN, COWMAN, PLEASE HOLD GORILLAMAN STILL *POUR MOI. MERCI.*
UNHAND ME, YOU--
AU REVOIR, THUNDERBOLTS!
HUP!
VOLER DANS LES AIRS EST...
...ZUT.

WE SHOULD GET YOU BACK INSIDE, MR. FISK.
DON'T YOU LIKE FIREWORKS, MARY?
I PREFER THEM WHEN THERE IS NO CHANCE THEY WILL DESTROY THE WHOLE CITY. AND WHEN THERE AREN'T EVIL ALIENS EVERYWHERE TRYING TO--
BOOM
THE BUBBLE... IT'S STILL THERE.
DISAPPOINTING BUT PREDICTABLE.
I NEED TO GO GET SET UP FOR THIS VIDEO BEFORE THE DAMN AVENGERS TAKE ALL THE CREDIT FOR KILLING KNULL.
BUT... HE WASN'T KILLED...
HE WILL BE SOON ENOUGH. THEY ALWAYS ARE.

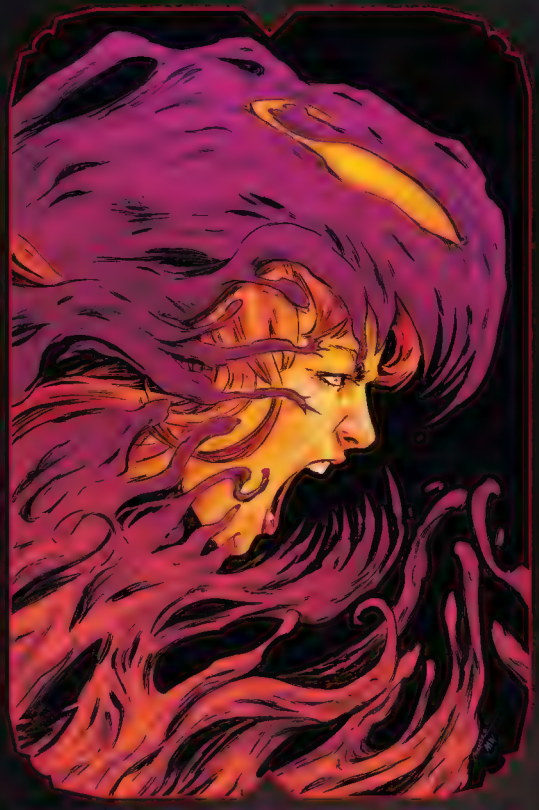
THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE DEAD, BUT THEY WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR WHO THEY WERE IN THEIR FINAL MOMENTS. THEY WERE--
BONJOUR, KING OF PINS! WE HAVE RETURNED.
NICE SWORD, MARY. YOU WANNA DANCE? 'CUZ I'D @!#$%& LOVE TO.
HEY, WHERE'D YOU GET THIS PICTURE OF ME? WAIT...WERE YOU JUST SAYING WE ALL DIED?! BECAUSE WE DIDN'T...
WELL, THOSE TWO DID. BUT WE DIDN'T.
THUNDERBOLTS! YOU'RE NOT DEAD. I'M ELATED.
REALLY? BECAUSE YOU SENT US ON A DAMN SUICIDE MISSION.
AND YET YOU LIVE...LIKE I KNEW YOU WOULD. BUT, IF I MAY, HOW ARE YOU NOT DEAD?
MEET PIGMENT.
FIGMENT.
SHE CAN CREATE ILLUSIONS ON A MASSIVE SCALE. AND YOU AND OSBORN HAPPENED TO HAVE HER LOCKED AWAY IN YOUR LITTLE DUNGEON.

THE PRESENCE OF FIGMENT AND THE SENTRY'S ROTTING CORPSE LEAD ME TO BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T ACTUALLY BLOW ANYTHING UP.
NOPE. BUT THE VOTERS DON'T KNOW THAT BECAUSE THEY'RE AS DUMB AS YOU ARE... UMM...SIR.
AND YOU WON'T EVEN HAVE TO BUY A NEW BRIDGE.
SO YOU BETRAYED ME, MASTERS?
I LED MY TEAM.
SO WHAT NOW? REVENGE? YOU'RE GOING TO KILL ME?
MONEY.
BLACKMAIL? VERY WELL. THE MONEY WE AGREED ON WILL BE PLACED IN YOUR ACCOUNTS PLUS A $50,000 BONUS FOR EACH OF YOU. AND THEN YOU SHOULD MAKE SURE I NEVER SEE ANY OF YOU EVER AGAIN.
YOU MISUNDERSTAND, WILLY. THAT'S JUST OUR FIRST WEEK'S SALARY.
ASSUMING SOME REAL "HEROES" DO MANAGE TO SAVE THE WORLD IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, NEXT WEEK...
...THE THUNDERBOLTS WILL BE READY TO GO TO WORK.
I LOVE THIS JOB.
MATT, JUAN & JOE. 2021!

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1 VARIANT BY
INHYUK LEE

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1
SECOND PRINTING VARIANT BY
INHYUK LEE

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #2
DESIGN VARIANT BY
FLAVIANO



KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #2 VARIANT BY
CARMEN CARNERO & MATTHEW WILSON

S.W.O.R.D. #2

IN THE DARK

NEW YORK CITY.
THERE'S AN OLD JOKE.
"WHERE WAS GRANNY WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT?"
IN THE DARK.

S.W.O.R.D. STATION ONE. "THE PEAK."

GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT ABOVE KRAKOA.

Okay. A shell of organic Klyntar material--what the *Venom symbiote* is made of--has formed around the Earth.

STATION COMMAND. "THE GREEN ROOM."

It's blocking the sun and restricting all communication. Nothing seems to breach it.

And according to Charles Xavier--*before we lost contact*--it's connected to a *god of darkness from before the dawn of time.*

So... *we have a situation.*

Give me a *full spectrum report.*

Red--Technical.

Krakoan gates are working--if I can bounce a signal through one, it'll solve the comms issue.

Do we have a *telepathic network* up yet?

Orange--Logistics.

Like Taki says, the gates are working. So's the *teleport team.*

Reckon *we're* the only way on or off planet right now...

Yellow--Medical and Energy Resources.

It's *gold.* My division color is *gold.*

I don't have anything for you.

Blue--Diplomatic.

I'm in touch with the *Galactic Council*--I'll transmit you their data on this.

Alpha Flight has yet to respond to hails.

Indigo--Security.

...

All right. *Violet--Analysis.*

Present.

What's your status, Mentallo?

Occupied.
I don't need to see that in my mind's eye, Flumm.
TANK!!!
What? I'm a human being, aren't I? I have biological needs, don't I?
If you prick me, do I not bleed? If you feed me, do I not crap?
Right now I'm wondering why we do feed you. When I brought you in, I expected more, Mentallo.
You're the best specialized telepath we have on station--
Oh, please.
You mean I'm the best you could get.
Don't sugarcoat the lily, Brand. I know what you really think of me--it comes off you in waves--
Change my mind.
Launchpad--two minutes.
You've got a mission.

PERSONNEL NOTES :: MARVIN FLUMM/MENTALLO

ABIGAIL BRAND :: E-7-14 11/20 :: GSTC 0245

I'm letting Marvin Flumm think he's the best telepath I can get.

He's a criminal to the core. That's not some moral statement from atop my lofty high ground -- just the truth. If Flumm weren't a telepath, he'd be a con artist or a second-story man -- the mind-reading just gets him invited to a fancier class of heist. He's never cared who sends the invite, either -- he has no ideology of his own, no credo or belief beyond what puts the most zeros in the Swiss account. Which makes him deeply despicable or deeply useful, depending how cynical I feel on a given day.

To a man like that, the mutant nation is the latest in a long line of hustles. Amnesty is an easy out. Resurrection is an ace in the hole. Mutant rights are a grift, just like last time.

A man like that has no loyalty to Krakoa. In a land with no use for money, he's got an undivided loyalty to the money. So as long as I have the money -- and I do, thanks to Nick Fury's black-budget bank card -- he'll take my orders over the Quiet Council's. There's no other telepath I could say that about.

Marvin Flumm is the best telepath I could get.

(Regarding his last foray into mutant rights -- he's going to keep bringing up "the you-know-what" until Wiz-Kid builds him a new one. Leaning into the midlife crisis might get more out of him.)

—

DEEP SECRET :: ABOVE EYES ONLY

Private note: Speaking of telepathy -- all personnel currently speak English, Krakoan and Galactic Standard via telepathic download. Any other language can be learned in seconds via similar methods. That eliminates the need for translator implants -- especially the old-style beta-era implants, the ones you had to code yourself like you had nothing better to do. In these troubled economic times, you can pick up a pack of twenty for fifty creds or a fuel cell -- assuming anybody remembers them at all.

I remember. In fact, I've got one in my neck loaded up with a cypher that changes twice daily and a pack of nineteen just like it in the usual spot.

I need to start making a list of people I trust.

People who speak my language.

JUMP SUITE. "THE LAUNCHPAD."
This is a reconnaissance mission in extreme circumstances. You'll head to Krakoa, assess the situation and report back with what they know down there.
Then head for New York--that seems to be the epicenter of this thing. Link up with the X-Men assisting there.
Find out what happened to Cable.
Frenzy. I can't help but notice you brought a friend.
The void-god's rampage is ending worlds, Commander. Even now our emperor and wizard battle this evil--no loyal Skrull can do less.
And if the choice is between flailing against the darkness alone or making myself useful alongside others...
Paibok's a trained Power Skrull, Brand. And he'd be my guest on Krakoa--I'll take responsibility.
You have to admit, an eye-witness to mutants helping save the galaxy would cut a lot of ice with the Kree/Skrull Alliance right now.
That is so. The emperor is a big fan of saving galaxies.
And we do need that ice broken...
What the hell. Welcome aboard, Paibok. Hope you survive the etcetera.

You'll be using the gates for now. Once we have comms up, Manifold or one of his team will handle evacuation if you--
Ridiculous. We should have working comms already.
So there's a goo dome in the way--it's Matsuya's job to solve trifling problems like that.
What on Earth is he wasting his time on?
TECHNOLOGY SUITE. "THE RED ZONE."
Maybe a Brashear portal inside a Krakoan gate? Would that make for a clearer--?
BREEP BREEP
Hmm?
Ugh.
Another one?

I'm a busy man, latex space dragon.
Take it elsewhere.
Trifling problems.
He's a busy man, Cortez.

Well, we're all busy...
Yes! I for one was extremely busy!
And if Xavier and Grey are down there not making a dent in these things, I've got to ask why you want me down there risking my neck?
Whatsamatter, Marvin--you scared?
Of course! Obviously!
There--there are bad goo creatures!
I'm a worse goo creature.
Good for you, Random.
I have these fragile things called bones in my body--
Enough, Flumm. You're not going with the others anyway.
I've got a different mission in mind for you.
What? Ow!
Oh boy! A solo op! All by your lonesome!
All right, let's go.
Putting yer big, purple helmet in the line of fire with no backup at all--that's some fun times, Marv!
Wish it was me, buddy!

...
Is it too late to go with--
Shut up, Flumm.
I'm lowering my mental defenses a little. Read my surface thoughts.
Look for "Protocol V."
No. No. I mean, you-- you wouldn't.
It's unthinkable--
And yet...
I thought it.

Because thinking the unthinkable is what I do every day.
Today, we're up against a primordial god of darkness. A potentially unstoppable force.
According to the data Frenzy got from the Galactic Council, it's already murdered nearly a dozen populated worlds.
You think Earth can't be next?
I... I don't... What about the super heroes?
Heroes can fail. I have to plan for that outcome.
That's what Protocol V is-- the plan. The survival of humanity in the face of planetary genocide.
I'm sorry if it's a method you don't like.
But then, if I had my choice, I'd be talking to Cable about this. Instead I'm stuck with you--the best I could get.
Prove me wrong, Mentallo.
Get this done.
...
Fine.
But I'll need the you-know-what.

KRAKOA.

There'll be a *flatscan* at the root of this somewhere.

It's always the flatscans.

Snow. Without the warmth of your sun, the weather has changed *rapidly.*

I admit, it's not how I *hoped* my first visit to Krakoa would be.

The *paradise* where your mutants could finally *lay down their arms...*

Yes. My sincere ***apologies,*** Ambassador.

I'm afraid you're not seeing us at our best.

A Skrull now? Are we inviting these aliens to our shores?

Then let me introduce myself!

I am called ***Sunfire--***

--and this is why!

FWOOSH

Burn, you foul-- *aaahh!*

So...so cold...

So dark...

Shiro!
Emma!
Mindlink with him! These creatures can possess mutants--
He's all right, Eric--mentally speaking, anyway.
If I grow some wings, I can fly up there--
I'll throw you. It's faster.
Allow me.
No, no. Let's not trouble our guest.
Flames protected him against it. But he's injured...
I--I can still fight--
He can't.
His legs are broken from the fall. His ribs too, where it crushed him.

Shiro Yoshida, whose mutant name is Sunfire.
Cast off the wounds of the body, Shiro.
What are you...yammering about?
Aaaaahh!
That--that feels--
Give me more!
It's the feeling of surpassing what you once were.
The joy that comes when the shackles you've spent your life in fall away...
We have no sun in our sky, Shiro. They have stolen it from us--as they've stolen so many things.
Take it back, Shiro.
Be the Krakoan sun.
Yes...

YES!
Still got it, Fabian.
Still the power behind the throne...

PERSONNEL NOTES :: FABIAN CORTEZ/*NO NAME GIVEN*

ABIGAIL BRAND :: E-7-15 11/24 :: GSTC 1078

Fabian Cortez has the exact power set required for the vital exploration and retrieval missions we're conducting in higher space. We need him on board.

Unfortunately, he's a treacherous sack of yuppie pus who'll stab any back or kiss any behind for a taste of power. I can fob him off with some meaningless title for now, but that won't salve his ambition forever, and it's possible some of the egos on the Council might fall for his shtick before I can create a long-term solution.

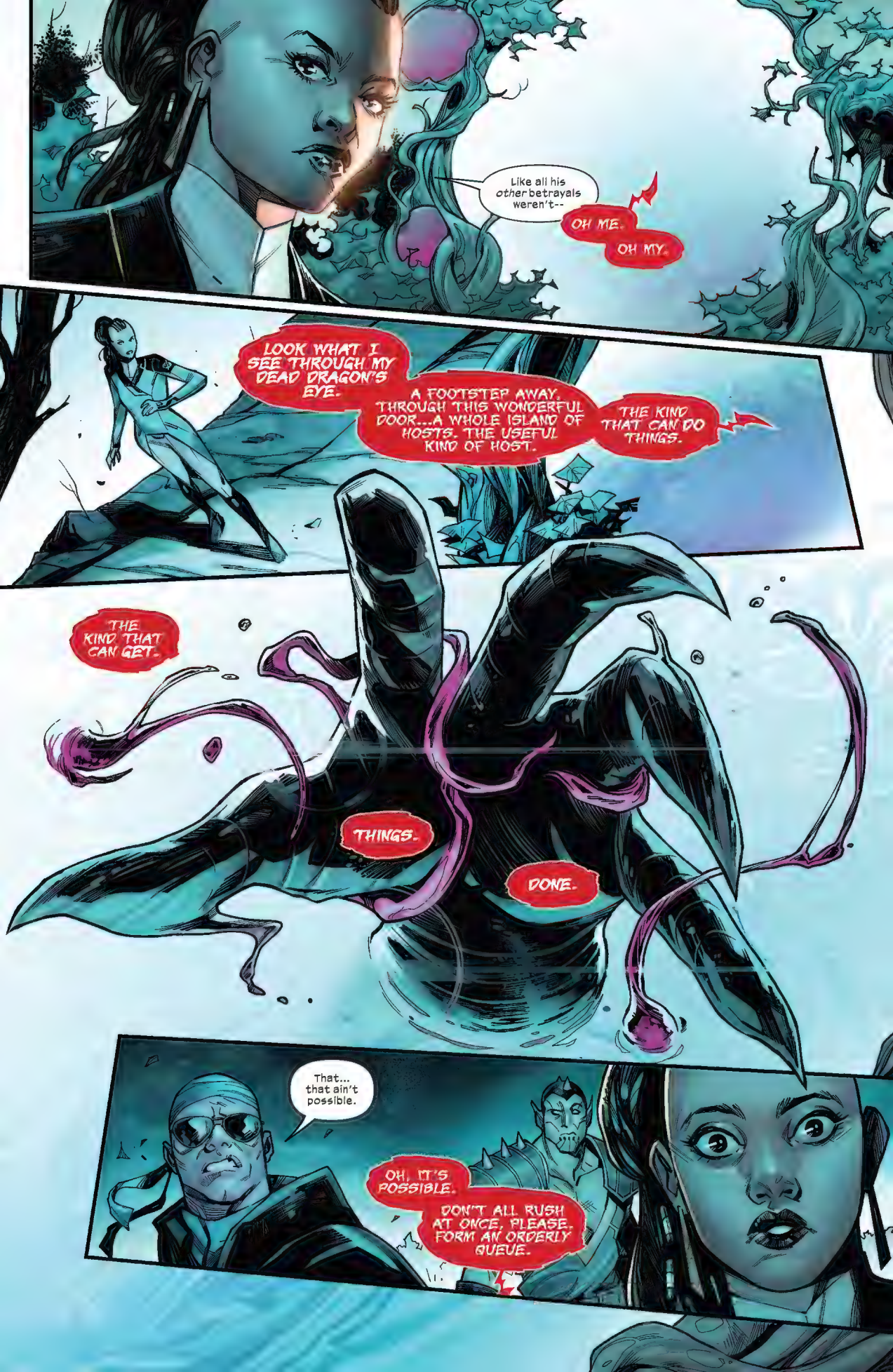
—

POTENTIAL REPLACEMENTS	PROBLEMS/ISSUES
Michael Nowlan/*No Name Given*	Unlike Cortez, Nowlan is unable to control the addictive nature of his power amplification. Also, Nowlan is unwilling to cooperate with Krakoan authority after learning that as a baseline human, his ex-wife **Susan Nowlan** cannot be resurrected.
Brian Dunlop/Boost	Boost amplifies powers by merging bodily with other mutants; as such, he cannot amplify more than one mutant at a time. *Note: still a very useful power. Consider for security team or* [redacted].
Absolon Mercator/Mister M	Unavailable. Whereabouts unknown.
[redacted]	Primary loyalty is most likely [redacted]. That said, she fits all other criteria, with the added bonus that [redacted] Snarkwar [redacted].

THE ARBOR MAGNA HATCHERY.
Looks like someone turned the *sun* back on...
Pfft! Ah couldae done that...
We could all have done *something* to help out there.
Sure. And while we're grabbing a little extra *glory on top of glory*, who's bringing mutants back from ***death?***
The good work doesn't stop for ***space dragons,*** Eva.
A *wee baby sun* though--s'no like et's a *bother*--
It's *power.* Power you're not using to revive a *fallen mutant.*
We're ***the Five,*** Kevin--*the bridge back to life.*
That's not a job we get to put aside--
VRRMMMM
--huh?
VRRRT
I couldn't have put it better myself.

Apologies-- I don't think we've met. My name is Mentallo, and this...
...is my Think Tank!
Otherwise known as your escape vehicle as you leave the Earth to die.
Welcome, welcome, children.
Welcome to Protocol V.

Well, my lord?
Do you remember me now?
Cortez.
You've done a great service for Krakoa today. You have our gratitude.
I trust Sunfire won't suffer any ill effects...?
I've been encouraged to make my power-boosting treatments less craveable, sire.
But at the risk of repeating myself...in the future, I would like to speak to the Council. In regard to certain national policy matters.
Pertaining to the flatscans.
...
Yes. Yes, of course.
I think that would be instructive.
Oh, great.
History repeating.


Like all his *other* betrayals weren't--
OH ME.
OH MY.
LOOK WHAT I SEE THROUGH MY DEAD DRAGON'S EYE.
A FOOTSTEP AWAY. THROUGH THIS WONDERFUL DOOR...A WHOLE ISLAND OF HOSTS. THE USEFUL KIND OF HOST.
THE KIND THAT CAN DO THINGS.
THE KIND THAT CAN GET.
THINGS.
DONE.
That... that ain't possible.
OH, IT'S POSSIBLE.
DON'T ALL RUSH AT ONCE, PLEASE. FORM AN ORDERLY QUEUE.

TO ME.
MY X-MEN.

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #3 VARIANT BY
DAVID LAFUENTE & CHRIS O'HALLORAN

S.W.O.R.D. #2 VARIANT BY
RUSSELL DAUTERMAN & MATTHEW WILSON

S.W.O.R.D. #3 VARIANT BY
TAKESHI MIYAZAWA & IAN HERRING

S.W.O.R.D. #4 VARIANT BY
MATTEO SCALERA & MORENO DINISIO

S.W.O.R.D. #3

EVERYWHERE MAN

Lila? It's Eden. Can you run Logistics for a bit?
I'm gonna be out of signal range.
Yeah, you're second in command. You're the backup--it's on the chart--
What, Gates?
He's not my mentor, he's a pain in the--what's he been telling you?
What? Well, of course he can speak, he's just being--look, I've gotta hang up.
You're in charge, okay? Okay.
What?
Where am I going?

Ah, you know. Where I *always* go.

Everywhere.

KATA TJUTA.

Eden!

You're dressed for it, *unna?*

Yeah, reckoned I'd check back home before work started.

And it's a ***space suit,*** Baz.

Deadly.

Glad *someone's* wrapped up warm. Strewth, middle of summer to *this*...

Sammy was saying this is all on *your* mob...

*What? **Krakoa** mob?*

Australia loves her X-Men, mate. Nah, reckon this is on yer ***Avengers.***

Iron Man's a drongo. *You* tell 'im from me.

Never see him, Sam. ***King T'Challa's*** the only Avenger I see these days--

Yeah?

Didn't you say you got *kidnapped* helping him out with his big fella *space business?*

Yeah. Yeah, that was... It was ***bad,*** Baz.

They made me *forget who I was.* They made me...

...

I killed people, Baz.

I killed a lot of people.
...
Yer doin' better *now* though, right?
Yeah, Sammy.
I'm doing better now.
Hey. You ***listen***, Eden Fesi. You be *careful* with Krakoa.
If they put you somewhere *dangerous* like that--
Earth's the most dangerous place today, Baz. I came to check on *you*.
You holding up? Seen any ***space dragons?***
Nah.
Aliens don't want any of *us*, mate.
Okay. Good.
Look, I gotta see a big *lizard guy* then chat with our *opposite numbers*-- then it's back to the *Peak*.
All safer than *here*. I promise.

...
I still worry.
I know.
You just remember what Gateway told you.
Aw, Gates is a--
He's your elder. You remember what he said.
You wanna go somewhere, you gotta know where you started from.
Yeah. I know, Uncle.
I know where I started from.
You gonna be all right without stars to guide you though? I know you get problems when you're indoors, mate.
And with that up there on, everywhere's indoors...
Not this where, Sam. This is where I was born.
We're on country.

See?
Don't worry about Krakoa, Uncle. They treat me all right. Krakoa's okay.
Listen-- they made up these three laws. Know what the third one is?
"Respect this sacred land."
They're okay.
...
They still had to make it a law...

SNARKWAR

Snarkwar is the colloquial term for a **Zn'rx War of Succession**.

Xenobiology has yet to tell us exactly how the children of a **Zn'rx regent** know instantly that the regent has died. However, the immediate reaction is always a violent urge on the part of the fallen regent's heirs to claim the vacant alpha position by any means necessary, heedless of any collateral damage caused. Though the urge can be resisted or satisfied through single combat, recent attempts at modernizing the succession process were derailed by the **Hyinar Usurpation** and the resultant rise to power of the traditionalist **Stote**, who undid many of the Bhadsha era's reforms during his brief time on the throne.

HEIRS OF EMPEROR STOTE *[ranked by odds of succession]*

Kuga of Bhoa Clan	*[25/1]*	Eldest of the current heirs. Radical modernist. Currently in retreat after a catastrophic defeat in the Ortuua System.
Wezel of Chita Clan	*[14/1]*	Traditionalist. Currently besieged at the edge of Utopian Kree space. Attempting negotiation with the Supremor for safe passage.
Khondor of Gylar Clan	*[4/1]*	Youngest of the current heirs. Moderate reformists. Currently in an agreed alliance until only they remain, whereupon the war will shift to a process of single combat.
Lyga of Gylar Clan	*[4/1]*	
Djagyar of Bhoa Clan	*[3/2]*	Radical traditionalist. Eschews a fixed power base in favor of a guerrilla fleet. Current favorite to succeed Stote on the Zn'rx throne.

"I'm surprised you could *keep* this appointment, Manifold.
"My forces have *no base*--only a shoal of *ships*, always moving. It must have been difficult to *find* us..."
DEEP SPACE. *THE FLAGSHIP OF THE ZN'RX PRINCE DJAGYAR.*
Nah, not really. You're right here.
I...suppose so. But still--*given the situation*--
You heard, then?
The Earth has fallen to Knull. Your own people broadcast the news to us.
How have they *fared* against the void-god?
We're working on it.
Matter of fact, that's *why* I kept the appointment.
Your mob do a lot of *stealing powers*, right?
Snarkwar requires weapons. *Inborn* weapons are the *best* weapons--*and so we acquire them.*
I appreciate that Earth's mutants prize their inborn talents *highly* though...
Right. Depowering mutants is a ***big no-no*** on Krakoa.
So we must be *desperate*...

Meet *Burner* and *Lifter*. They're volunteers.
Pyrokinesis, gravikinesis, increased strength and durability...
Interesting. With such weapons, I could enter the fray *personally*...
Do your volunteers understand that the transfer process can be *fatal?*
They're *hoping* for that. It'll save a lot of bother.
I'm not sure I *understand*...
You don't have to. Point *is*, these two are ready and willing if you want to take the *deal*.
And the deal *is*...?
You're the most *mobile* of the Zn'rx heirs--you don't have a base, just a *fleet*, like you said.
Everyone else is busy protecting their *planets*--you don't *have* a planet to protect.
So you could bring your *fleet* to *Earth* and help destroy the *symbiote shell* around it.
And together--*you*, *Krakoa* and *Earth*--we could *finish Knull*.
...
Tell me...
...Have you heard of the planet *Ortuua?*

A peaceful, sparsely populated world--but with vast *mineral resources* and close to a strategic *binary wormhole.*
My sister **Kuga** was planning to conquer it. Had she established a *staging area* and *weapons factories* there, the war would be *over* now.
But she did *not* conquer Ortuua.
Knull had already destroyed it.
Kuga had committed her troops to take a world that no longer *existed.* The error gave me a rare chance to *outflank* her.
Her losses were... ***severe.***
Now she is in *hiding,* attempting to rebuild her forces. But it *cannot be done.* Her warriors are already *deserting* her for stronger armies-- ***like mine.***
My most powerful opponent has been removed from play...
...because of ***Knull.*** Only because of Knull.
Now ask me again to destroy him.

You're not serious--Knull's a monster--
A monster that destroys worlds. But I have no world.
And my enemies do.
So let Knull come!
Let him tear the very stars apart!
I will build new stars from the wreckage--
--and my children's children will make sweet war by their light!
There will be no deal, Manifold. Now go-- the way you came.
Yeah, yeah.
I've got places to be anyway. Good luck with your endless war, mate.
Hope it brings you joy...

...
"Joy."
The Earther word for Snark-war--
Prince Djagyar?
What?
Who--?
Time to die.

THE ALPHA FLIGHT SPACE STATION.
THE OFFICE OF HENRY PETER GYRICH.
Gyrich? Hello?
Anyone here?
...deal properly with the Krakoa problem.
You think I'm not? Remember who you're talking to, Killian.
I'm Acting Commander of the Alpha Flight program. That includes Gamma Flight.
No, it's not the same. Even so--believe me, I get the idea.

PERSONNEL NOTES :: EDEN FESI/*MANIFOLD*

ABIGAIL BRAND :: E-7-12 11/05 :: GSTC 0833

Eden Fesi is not a teleporter. People treat him like one, but that's not what he is at all.

Eden Fesi talks to space.

If he tells the universe to fold itself until he can walk across it in a single step -- it does. If he tells space to warp so light passes all the way around it without ever hitting him -- to form a little bubble of invisibility just for him -- it will.

He says it's not "telling." It's "asking." It still terrifies me if I think about it for too long.

That aside, he's a really nice guy.

—

...No--no issues with the *chart*, Doctor.
The mutants are *organized* now--we need to coordinate in similar fashion.
Well, I have the *redacted* version.
Obviously, I'd like to see the *full schematic*, but I understand the need for--
Hmm?
Um...no.
No, obviously I haven't ***printed*** *it out.*
What do you take me for?

...
Well, I'd be *lying* if I said this Kree thing wasn't a *factor*...
Unfortunately not. Without *comms*, we're completely blind.
But we have to assume the *super heroes* are going to do what they always do. ***The alternative is unthinkable.***
If the worst happens, who will the *survivors* be? *Mutants, gamma mutates*...nobody *human.*
Yes. Exactly.
Not on our watch.
PROTOCOL

ORCHIS PROTOCOL

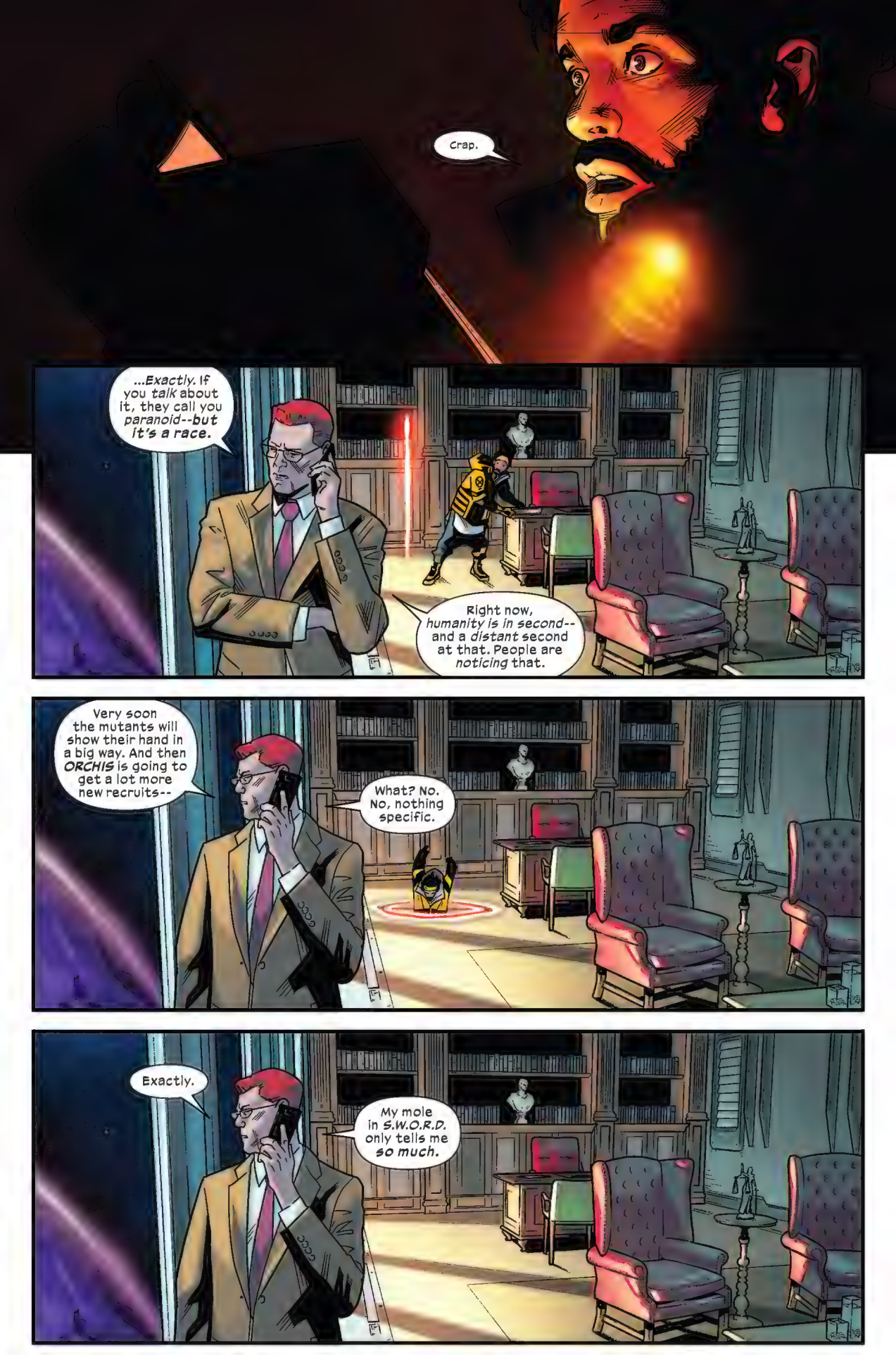
[redacted] **Homo superior** is statistically inevitable.

[redacted] sustained resistance [redacted]

ORCHIS is [redacted]

DIRECT STRATEGIES

[CLASSIFIED]


Crap.
...Exactly. If you talk about it, they call you paranoid--but it's a race.
Right now, humanity is in second--and a distant second at that. People are noticing that.
Very soon the mutants will show their hand in a big way. And then ORCHIS is going to get a lot more new recruits--
What? No. No, nothing specific.
Exactly.
My mole in S.W.O.R.D. only tells me so much.

JUMP SUITE.
"THE LAUNCHPAD."
Brand! We got trouble!
Listening.
Remember that mob orbiting the sun with a Sentinel head? ORCHIS?
They got Henry Gyrich.
"Got" as in...?
He's turned. He's with them--I saw the org chart.
Like we didn't have enough problems...
Unfortunately, we do have enough problems. Gyrich will have to wait.
Comms are still down, and nobody's returned from Krakoa--even to check in. I don't like it.
Could be they need extraction...
Gotcha. Needs doing, will be done.
Reckon I'll just be a--
--minute.
What happened here...?

I HAPPENED.

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
GEOFF SHAW & FRANK MARTIN

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
KHARY RANDOLPH & EMILIO LOPEZ

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
SUPERLOG

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1 VARIANT BY
ALEX SAVIUK & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR

S.W.O.R.D. #4

THE KRAKOAN SUN

It's dark. It's cold. Something happened.
I was on Krakoa... something stole Cable's face...and then...
Where am I?
It feels like a black hole around me, crushing in on every side. Physically and emotionally.
Endless despair. Everything feels flat. Lifeless. Hopeless.
I'm alone in the dark.
This can't hurt me. I have to remember that.
Nothing hurts me. And if something tries, I hurt it back. Hard.
I just need to know where to start. This darkness...it goes on forever.
I just need something to latch on to.
There's a buzzing in my ears.

Is someone talking?
DO YOU LIKE WHAT I'VE DONE WITH THE PLACE? ANTI-KRAKOA. MY BEAUTIFUL DARK GARDEN OF DEATH.
I DON'T HAVE FULL CONTROL JUST YET--BUT MY REACH IS SPREADING NICELY...
How'd you do it?
DID IT LOOK TOO EASY? DO YOU SUSPECT ME OF CHEATING?
I USED YOUR PRIVATE ENTRANCE, AND EVERYONE WAS SCANDALIZED. THEIR ATTENTION WAS ON ME...
...BUT MY DEAD DRAGON STILL HAD SO MUCH RAW SYMBIOTE MATERIAL FOR ME TO WORK WITH.
SO I REACHED OUT AND GAVE IT A PUSH--A FLOOD TIDE OF BEAUTIFUL BLACK ICHOR OVERTURNED THE BOARD--
--AND NOW ALL THE PIECES ARE MINE.
SO I'M SORTING THROUGH THEM AT MY LEISURE... DECIDING WHAT I WANT TO KEEP...

...AND WHAT I DON'T.
BRING ME SUNFIRE, MY PET, AND HIS IMMACULATE FRIEND. AND WAKE THEM BOTH UP FOR THIS.
"THE KRAKOAN SUN"-- ISN'T THAT WHAT HE SAID?
What...?
NO, please--
SHLORRD
--mglmmp--
I DON'T LIKE SUNS.
NOW.
WHAT DO WE DO WITH YOU...?

S.W.O.R.D. STATION ONE. "THE PEAK."
There's good news and bad news, Brand.
Talk to me.
I solved the *comms problem.* Actually, I'm mad at myself for not getting it *sooner.*
We don't *need* to send a signal through a Krakoan gate--because *the signal is the gate.*
To make the gate *work,* the start point has to talk to the end point--*a piece of Krakoa* talking to *a piece of Krakoa.*
I can send *information* through that connection--even convince Krakoa to grow *radio transmitters* on the far gates--*but--*
But you already *did it.* And nothing.
We should be hearing from someone *down there*--if we're *not,* and the connection isn't the issue--
--then that means *trouble,* Commander. *Permission to take a closer look?*
I need you where you'll do the *most good,* Wiz-Kid.
But let's try my ace in the hole.
This is Brand calling Mentallo--

THE ARBOR MAGNA HATCHERY.
--if you're there, pick up.
Commander! It's not my fault!
Well, that's encouraging.
I tried to explain the protocol-- I swear--
But it, uh, didn't go well--
Is that Commander Brand?
Put me on.
Hnntt--
Is what I'm seeing in this mind legitimate? This kidnap attempt is on you?
It's not a kidnapping, Summers. It's an attempt to ensure the survival of humankind.
Or mutantkind. You're all Earthers to me.

Give me the fine details.
Mentallo escorts you to the Summer House on the Moon. You take their Cerebro cradle--the mind bank--to Shi'ar space.
Strike one.
DNA samples will be brought to you. Not all of them--
Strike two.
--but enough to eliminate inbreeding and other risks. Then, if human life is wiped out, you do what you do--and bring it back.
Mentallo can perform the necessary telepathic surgery--
And that's strike three.
Really? He's good enough to bring back Xavier, at least...
Please. That's like using a car wash to restore the Mona Lisa.
I'm right here.
And your safe harbor is Shi'ar territory? How many Shi'ar colonies fell to goo dragons this week?
Four. And counting.
And using only part of Sinister's DNA bank--that's just grotesque.
The Five's reason for being is to bring every mutant back.
We're all still reeling from losing Rockslide and Gorgon, and now you want to lose millions more?
Fine. I get it--you don't want to run from the fight--

You're projecting.
Establishing backup hatcheries in secure locations is a great idea. I'm all for it.
But doing it on the fly, during a universal crisis...that's just stupid.
Things don't always happen on our schedule--
You saw ahead enough to plan all this. You just didn't run it past anyone here.
You say we're all Earthers to you--like you're so enlightened--
--but all I see from you is the same old human thinking!
Spycraft and machinations, secrets and mysteries-- who does it serve?
Well, I don't blindly serve Krakoa. And some things are need-to-know.
I've got my reasons.
Do you? Because I think you just like games the way Mentallo likes toys.
I mean, who needs a giant tank for an extraction mission?
I do.

Wiz-Kid...?
Where I'll do the most good.
You can teleport?
I built a translocator into the chair and a receiver into the Think Tank. Human tech has its uses.
I'd have come via Krakoan gate--much less effort--
Holy crap!
--but I suspect Krakoa's compromised.
Protect the pods--
No need to endanger yourselves.
This is what the Think Tank's for.
You're driving it?
But it's my baby...
Sorry, Mentallo...

...but your baby's all grown up.

THE EVERYWHERE MAN. ONE-OF-A-KIND SPACE MANIPULATOR AND UNIVERSAL TELEPORTER.
AND YET... NOT AN OMEGA. DOESN'T THAT WORRY YOU, EDEN?
THAT SOMEWHERE, THERE'S SOMEONE MORE?
WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO WITH THE MAN-I-FOLD?
I CAN THINK OF LOTS OF THINGS. YOU'RE A USEFUL KINDA GUY, EDEN FESI.
Not really thought about it.
HSSS
OUCH! CAN'T TOUCH THIS! LOOKS LIKE WE'RE AT AN IMPASSE, EDEN. A STALEMATE.
Nah. You don't believe that.
And neither do I. You're going on a little trip, Knull.
Say hello to the center of the Sun.

I THINK NOT.
BODYSLIDE~
~BY ONE.
ISN'T TELEPORTATION WONDERFUL? EVERYBODY'S DOING IT!
HA!
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU CAN'T GO TOO FAR--I HAVE AN ISLAND FOR A HOSTAGE. AND UNLIKE ME, YOU ARE MORTAL....AND MUST TIRE...
...SO RUN IN YOUR CIRCLES, RABBIT.

YOU'LL TASTE BETTER FOR IT!
BODYSLIDE!
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, EDEN!
Someone's talking.
BODYSLIDE!
Pinpoint the sound.
HA!
Unngh--

Close.
BODYSLIDE!
TOO SLOW! AND--
--BODYSLIDE!
Closer...
DOWN!
Uff--
DEAR, DEAR. NEXT TO THIS BODY, YOU'RE NO FIGHTER.
OR MUCH OF A TELEPORTER.
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE WORTH KEEPING, EDEN...
There you are.

Right there.
SKRK
WHAT--?
All in one motion.
Disarm him.
In every sense.
WRRUNCH
EEAAAH!

The arm has the tech. No more bodysliding for you.
YOU-- YOU-- I'LL MAKE YOU KILL EVERYONE YOU LOVE-- BEAT YOUR OWN CHILDREN TO DEATH--
I've only ever loved *one* person.
And if he'd felt the same, *you'd* be my stepson.
So this must feel like a win.
KRAKK
Figured one of you had to be playing possum. Glad it was *you*, Jo.
So anyway-- *now that I've got a moment to breathe...*

...I don't teleport. I'm more than that.

I talk to the universe...

...and we get along, so she does me little favors.

Like catch a piece of the sun--move it from there to here--

--and wrap it in a bubble of folded space so it doesn't hurt anyone.

NO--

Anyone I don't want it to.

You don't like suns? That's a shame--

--'cos the universe gave me this one as a gift!

Take a closer look!

WHAAARRGHH!

Unnhh...

Yeah.

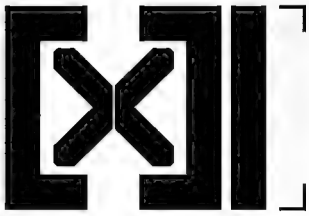
And I'm not even an Omega mutant. Somewhere... there's someone more.

So maybe don't come back.

I'm seeing sunlight!
What?
I said I'm seeing sunlight! Sun-light!
What?
Yeah--
--symbiote activity's died right down.
So we can probably stop with the lights and the noise.
That is, if you guys want to get back to work right away...
Wan mair song! Wan mair song!
Okay-- one more--
Yeah! Mutant techno party tonight!
Now he's borrowing my records.
It's not fair.

It's not fair.
This keeps *happening*... I'm never...never good enough...
When will I be good enough?
This creature took your **father**, Nathan.
It took **all of us here** without effort. If there is a common factor there, it's not *deficiency of talent.*
So let's refrain from blaming ourselves for the acts of our *oppressors*, shall we?
What's our *next move*, sir?
Krakoa has fought off alien invasions before. In the end, this will be no different.
Contact the *Five*. Move **Sunfire** to the front of the resurrection queue *with immediate effect.*
Then mutants with proven *anti-symbiote* abilities--*fire, electricity, light.*
Manifold will guard the gate until then.
Take it as read.
Well--if *Brand* says so--yeah, okay--
And then... *after this is over...*

...tell the Five to resurrect Fabian Cortez.
He and I have matters to discuss.



THE QUIET COUNCIL OF KRAKOA

RE: MEETING REQUEST :: EARLIEST CONVENIENCE :: MAGNETO

As requested, there will be a Council meeting at [redacted] on the [redacted]th of [redacted] for the purposes of discussing the second law of mutantdom and potential amendments thereto.

As certain members of the Quiet Council are unable to attend, the matter will be debated by a quorum of eight, with any binding resolutions to be brought before the full Council at such time as all twelve are in attendance.

In addition, there will be three guests in attendance [Fabian Cortez, [redacted] and [redacted]] -- and, as always, *Krakoa will be listening.*

—

Erik –

While there's no technical reason not to grant your request for this meeting, I strongly urge you to reconsider.

It's playing with fire, old friend.

Charles

[DE. [ep]_OX]
[SEC [ret]_04]

++ [redacted] ++
++ [redacted] ++
++ [redacted] *VOGHT* ++

++ [redacted] ++
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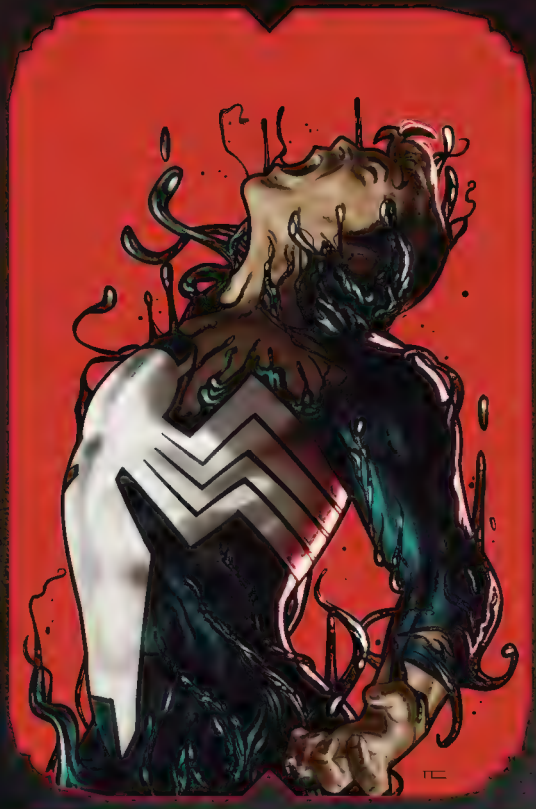
[B_[urn]ING....[O]
[HE__[art].. [4]

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #2 VARIANT BY
DECLAN SHALVEY



SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #3 VARIANT BY
TAURIN CLARKE

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #4 VARIANT BY
DAVID NAKAYAMA

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #5 VARIANT BY
DAVE RAPOZA

KING IN BLACK: BLACK PANTHER

CATHEXIS

"ATTEND ME, T'CHALLA. TAKE HEED OF WHAT I SAY."
OROROโ€ฆ
NYC. THEN.
"EVERY PROBLEM YOU MAY FACE, EVERY OBSTACLE IN YOUR WAY, IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO PROPER PLANNING."
DON'T THINK ABOUT HER NOW.
"PLAN, MY SON. PLAN WELL. WITH A SOBER MIND. WITH AN ICY EYE.

"DUTY. KNOWLEDGE. HONOR. LOYALTY. JUSTICE. THESE ARE THE *CLAWS* OF THE PANTHER CLAN.
WAKANDA. NOW.
"BAST TELLS US VICTORY LIVES IN THE *MIND* BEHIND THE CLAW.
"THE *BLACK PANTHER* MUST BE THAT MIND."
"BUT WHAT OF THE CLAWS, FATHER?"
"OH, MY SON..."

"WE MUST ALWAYS BE THAT AS WELL."
KRAKOOM
WARRIOR! SHEATH!
MY KING!
THANK YOU FOR MY LIFE, MY KING.
NEVER MIND THAT!
SHEATH! NOW!

NDIYATHOBELA.*
*XHOSA FOR "I OBEY."
WARRIORS!
DON YOUR SHEATHS!
RALLY TO ME!
WE CANNOT SAVE THE FALLEN!

BUT BY BAST'S TEETH--
--NO MORE OF YOU WILL FALL!
SHMMMMMMMMM
ZAMM
ULOYISO,* MY KING! WE HAVE WON!
*XHOSA FOR "VICTORY."
T'CHALLA!
T'CHALLA!
T'CHALLA!
NONE OF THAT. THE PULSE WILL NOT WORK A SECOND TIME. THE CREATURES WILL ADAPT IN MOMENTS...

BIRNIN ZANA.
"...AND THERE ARE MANY MILES BETWEEN HERE AND HOME."
NO!
FORGET THE STRUCTURES, CAPTAIN, JUST GET THOSE PEOPLE INTO THE HYDRO-SKIFF. NOW!
BRING UP THE SECOND LINEAR MODEL. QUICKLY, PLEASE.
PRINCESS! THE JABARI-LANDS ARE BEING OVERRUN. I'VE LOST CONTACT WITH BIRNIN BASHENGA. YOU MUST FIND A WAY TO STRENGTHEN THE BORDER SHIELD.
OVERLAY WITH THE MOST RECENT EXPONENTIAL MODEL. THANK YOU.
SHURI. ARE YOU LISTENING?
A LINEAR TRACK GIVES US DAYS UNTIL COMPLETE COMPROMISE. EXPONENTIAL TRACK... HOURS?
CURSE IT, SHURI. THE SHIELD HAS SEVEN BREACHES NOW. YOU HAVE TO--
THE SHIELD WON'T HELP.
WE'RE LOSING PEOPLE! COMMUNICATIONS ARE FAILING IN THE OUTER REGIONS!
EXPECTED. THE INFECTION INCREASES THEIR NUMBERS AT THE SAME RATE THEY CUT OURS.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "INFECTION"?
REMOVE YOUR HAND AT ONCE, GENERAL.
APOLOGIES, PRINCESS. YOU SAY INFECTION, BUT THIS IS AN INVASION.
WAKANDA IS ALIVE, OKOYE. IT LIVES, IT BREATHES.
KNULL'S SYMBIOTE ARMY ISN'T INVADING IN ANY CONVENTIONAL WAY. THEY HAVE NO GUNSHIPS, NO TANKS, NO BATTLE SUITS.
THEY AREN'T DESTROYING STRUCTURES, HOLDING TERRITORY, DROPPING BOMBS.
THEY ARE KILLING SOME OF OUR PEOPLE, YES, BUT TRANSFORMING MORE. THE PATTERN MIRRORS A VIRAL INFECTION GROWING IN WAKANDA'S BODY.
THEN WE FIGHT THEM. OUR WEAPONS, OUR TECHNOLOGY--
THE MATH ISN'T WITH US.
OUR BEST OPTION IS TO GATHER EVERY SURVIVOR WE CAN AND RUN.
ARE YOU SAYING... EVACUATE...ALL OF WAKANDA?
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE OUR PEOPLE.
PRAGMATIC AS ALWAYS, MY SISTER, BUT I DISAGREE.

THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER WAY.
WARRIORS, SECURE THE CORE PERIMETER.
CORE, PROVIDE INTERFACE.
T'CHALLA! YOU'RE HERE!
I AM HERE. HELLO, SHURI. GENERAL.
MY KING.
YOU ARE MONITORING THE STATUS OF THE INCURSION, I ASSUME.
WE'RE FIGHTING THESE CREATURES AS BEST WE CAN, BUT FOR EVERY ONE WE KILL--
THEY TRANSFORM TWO OF OURS. OR MORE.
TECTONIC MAPPING, PLEASE. TOPOGRAPHIC AS WELL. AND SECURITY SYSTEMS.
THE BORDER SHIELD HAS SEVEN BREACHES. THE CREATURES STREAM IN VIA THESE POINTS, MASSING IN STRATEGIC SPACES BEFORE STREAMING OUT AGAIN.
OBVIOUSLY, YOU NOTED THIS PATTERN, SHURI. AN INFECTION.
T'CHALLA...

THE BREACHES CANNOT BE SEALED. DO NOT WASTE TIME ON THAT. INSTEAD--
JUST TELL US HOW TO FIGHT THEM. THESE THINGS ARE... UNNATURAL...THEY *CORRUPT* EVERYTHING THEY TOUCH.
T'CHALLA...
BIRNIN BASHENGA IS LOST. THE JABARI-LANDS ARE LOST. I HAVE SENT WARRIORS TO BEGIN EVACUATION OF THE REMAINING CITIES... THE NECROPOLIS MUST BE SEALED...
YOU ALSO MEAN FOR US TO RUN? HIDE? I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HAVE ANOTHER WAY.
T'CHALLA...
THE FIRST PRIORITY IS THE SAFETY OF THE PEOPLE. THOSE WHO CANNOT ESCAPE THE CITIES MUST TAKE SHELTER IN THE BUNKERS. THE REST--
FORGIVE ME, MY KING, BUT THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPING THESE THINGS.
WARRIORS WILL FIGHT. THE *DORA MILAJE* WILL FIGHT. THE *HATUT ZERAZE* WILL FIGHT. BUT MOST OF OUR PEOPLE ARE NOT SOLDIERS.
WHAT OF THE YOUNG? THE OLD? THE FRAIL? ALL THOSE WHO CAN'T RUN FAST OR FAR ENOUGH? WHAT BECOMES OF *THEM?*
T'CHALLA...
WHERE IS *STORM?*

SHE... ORORO...MY BELOVED...
DON'T THINK ABOUT HER. FOCUS.
ORORO IS NO LONGER A FACTOR.
...
...OH...
SHURI, YOU WILL NEED TO OPEN YOUR *PROTOTYPE VAULT*. GENERAL OKOYE, ATTEND ME.

OPEN MY VAULT? T'CHALLA, DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY--
NUMBER FOURTEEN. NOTHING IN THE OTHERS WILL BE USEFUL.
BUT THAT VAULT'S FOR PROJECTS THAT FOCUS ON--
OUR PEOPLE WILL NEED TO BE BROUGHT TO THE CITY SHELTERS, PROTECTED FROM THE INVADERS. YOU WILL LEAD THAT OPERATION PERSONALLY, SISTER.
THEY WILL NEED TO SEE YOU LEADING, GIVING THEM CONFIDENCE THIS WILL COME OUT ALL RIGHT.
T'CHALLA, THEY NEED YOU. FOR ALL THAT AND MORE.
WE MUST STAND AND FIGHT THESE CREATURES, MY KING. AN ORGANIZED MILITARY RESPONSE, NOW, WHILE WE HAVE TIME--
SHURI WILL PROTECT THE PEOPLE. YOU, OKOYE, WILL PILOT THE HAND OF BAST.
WHAT?!
SURELY ALL WE NEED TO DO IS GATHER OUR FORCES. THE WARRIORS YOU BROUGHT WITH YOU SURVIVED THEIR FIGHT. WE--
I LOST MORE THAN HALF OF THEM GETTING HERE. THEIR VIBRANIUM ALLOY ARMOR IS NOT PROOF AGAINST THE CREATURES' INFECTION.
BUT IF WE STRENGTHEN THE SHIELD BARRIER--
JUST GIVE ME THREE HOURS. TWO.
WE DO NOT HAVE TWO HOURS.
CORE. PROVIDE SURVEILLANCE IMAGING OF CENTRAL NIGANDA.
BREEP

THE DRAGON IS COMING.
CORE. ZOOM 1000-PERCENT. GROUND LEVEL.
BREEP
THE DRAGON IS A PLAGUE STORM, TRANSFORMING ALL ANIMAL LIFE IN ITS WAKE INTO THE CREATURES INVADING WAKANDA.
WHO, IN TURN, TRANSFORM OR KILL ALL THEY CAN.
THIS IS HAPPENING ALL OVER AFRICA. ALL OVER THE WORLD.
THIS IS WAKANDA'S FATE IF THE ENEMY'S PROGRESS CANNOT BE STOPPED.

SOULS OF THE MOTHERS...
WE MUST...WE MUST MODIFY THE BORDER SHIELD... DIVERT MORE POWER...
THE SHIELD WILL NOT PROTECT US. THE INVADERS EXPLOITED A FREQUENCY VARIANCE IN ORDER TO GET IN.
ADDED POWER MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. THE SHIELD CAN ONLY SLOW THEM, NO MORE.
BREEP
CORE, CEASE IMAGING.
THERE IS NO MORE TIME FOR DEBATE. YOU MUST DO AS I SAY NOW.
YOU MUST TRUST THAT I HAVE A PLAN TO SAVE US, THOUGH I CANNOT TELL YOU THE DETAILS.
YOU MUST TRUST ME.

CORE. RELAY CASUALTY REPORTS TO MY KIMOYO CLUSTER.
BREEP
YOU'RE CERTAIN? IF WE REVEAL THE HAND OF BAST TO THE WORLD...
WE WILL TEACH THESE CREATURES WHAT IT MEANS TO CROSS OUR BORDERS, OKOYE.
JUST AS WE TAUGHT THE SKRULLS.*
*BACK IN SECRET INVASION: BLACK PANTHER! --WIL
AWAIT MY ORDER, GENERAL. BE READY.
ULOYISO, MY KING.

TINK
WELCOME BACK, PRINCESS.
HELLO, VAULT.
WHAT DISCIPLINE WILL YOU EXPLORE TODAY?
ALCHEMY.
"T'CHALLA.
"I HEAR YOU RAN AWAY FROM MARTIAL TRAINING TODAY. IS THIS SO?"

THE TEST WAS UNFAIR. TEACHER MOESWE CHANGED THE RULES.
INDEED?
AND WHAT RULES WERE THOSE?
"IT WAS TO BE SINGLE COMBAT. INSTEAD THERE WERE *FIVE*.
"THREE WERE *JABARI*. ALL OLDER THAN ME. ONE HAD A BATTLE CLUB."
"I SEE... AND THEY DEFEATED YOU?"
"THEY BEAT ME, FATHER. THEY HURT ME. THEY *CHEATED*."
"YOU FOUGHT YOUR BEST, NO? ONE OF THE BOYS WENT TO THE HEALERS, DID HE NOT?"
"I *LOST*. I AM THE PRINCE. ONE DAY I WILL BE KING. I CANNOT ALLOW--"
"STOP.
"DO YOU KNOW THE TALE OF BAST AND ANANSI'S DRUM?"
"YES, OF COURSE, BUT--"
"TELL IT TO ME, PLEASE."
VAULT. A RING OF LIGHT, PLEASE. AND SEAL THE DOOR.
YES, PRINCESS.
TECH
KOMUICI

TECH
SHADES OF MY MOTHERS, GUIDE ME. SHADES OF MY FATHERS, DEFEND.
HEART OF MY BROTHER BESIDE ME. SOULS OF MY SISTERS--
--BEGIN!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
UKUSUKA KWENYE, EZININZI!
RUMMBLE
ALL RIGHT, ULYSSES...
IT IS TIME YOU PAID YOUR DEBT.
"EVERYONE HURRY! WARRIORS! DEFEND!"

FALL BACK! FORM A WALL! BRACE!
BIRNIN BASHENGA.
PROTECT OUR PEOPLE! LET NONE OF THESE THINGS THROUGH!
SO MANY, CAPTAIN SELE! TOO MANY! HOW CAN WE HOPE TO HOLD THEM ALL?
WE WILL HOLD THEM BECAUSE WE MUST, WARRIOR!
?!

FOR WE ARE WAKANDA!
GET THE PEOPLE TO THE SUB-SHELTERS! NOTHING CAN PENETRATE THOSE DOORS.
THIS WAS MY PLAN, PRINCESS, BUT HOW...
HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS?!
MAGIC PLUS SCIENCE EQUALS ALCHEMY, CAPTAIN. I'M HERE WITH YOU AND THE CITY GUARD...
...I'M WITH THE HATUT ZERAZE...
BIRNIN MUTATA.
...AND THE DORA MILAJE.
SO TRUST ME...
BIRNIN AZZARIA.

...WAKANDA WILL NOT FALL TODAY!
SHURI. ARE YOU WELL, SISTER?
HARD HOLDING THIS MANY SPIRIT DOLLS AT ONCE.
FYI, THESE CREATURES ARE ADAPTING TO OUR WEAPONS.
HMM.
A MAN CALLED EDDIE BROCK GAVE US A DESCRIPTION OF THE ALIENS' MOLECULAR STRUCTURE. IT IS SIMILAR TO REED RICHARDS' UNSTABLE PARTICLES.
IS THAT VERIFIED? FACTUAL?
INDEED. IT IS WHY MY FORCE PULSE AT THE BORDER WAS INSUFFICIENT.
I ASSUME YOU'RE PREPARING A COUNTERMEASURE?
RIGHT NOW, YES. THOUGH THE WORK IS... DELICATE...TIME-CONSUMING.
THEN WHY ARE YOU WASTING TIME TALKING TO ME?
I... WANTED TO APOLOGIZE.
APOLOGIZE? FOR WHAT?

AH. I SEE.
KRAKKKK!
RAAARRRRRRR!!!
YOU WERE WAITING FOR THE DRAGON.
I HOPE THIS WORKS, BROTHER. I REALLY HOPE IT--
WOOORRRRRCHHHH!!!
OKOYE, ARE YOU MONITORING?
OF COURSE, MY KING. IS IT TIME?
YES--

"DEPLOY THE HAND OF BAST."
I PRAY TO THE ANCESTORS IT WILL BE ENOUGH!
THE HAND OF BAST WAS BUILT TO KILL THE PHOENIX.
YOU WERE BORN TO PROTECT WAKANDA.

YOU WILL BE A MATCH FOR ONE DRAGON.
ULOYISO!
"THE STORY, T'CHALLA. I AM WAITING."
"YES, FATHER.
"IT IS KNOWN THAT BAST WAS ALWAYS JEALOUS OF HER YOUNGER BROTHER, ANANSI, THE MAKER OF SECRETS AND STORIES.
"BAST IS THE GODDESS OF MANY THINGS, BUT ALSO, SHE IS A CAT. CURIOUS.
"SHE WAS FOREVER SNEAKING INTO ANANSI'S WORKSHOP, SPYING ON HIS CREATIONS.
"ONE DAY ANANSI HAD ENOUGH. HE PLAYED A TRICK ON HIS SISTER.
T'CHALLA...

LOOK... WHAT YOU DID... TO ME!
YOU... GAVE ME... TO KNULL!
KNULL... ATE MY... ALCHEMY! AND WHEN HE...TOOK ALL...MY SPIRIT DOLLS...
"ANANSI WOVE A GREAT DRUM MADE OF SILK AND STARS AND STORIES.
"DAZZLED BY THE SIGHT OF IT, BAST COULD NOT HELP HERSELF.
"SHE POUNCED UPON THE DRUM, HOPING TO LEARN WHAT ANANSI HAD HIDDEN THERE.
...KNULL TOOK...ME!
KLIK
"BUT THE DRUM...WAS NOT A DRUM. BAST SOON FOUND HERSELF TRAPPED INSIDE.
THIS...IS YOUR...FINAL WEAPON? KLAW'S... SONIC EMITTER?
EVEN...IF IT TOUCHED ME...IT'S TOO SMALL... TOO WEAK...
I KNOW.

"THE MORE SHE STRUGGLED, THE MORE SHE WAS COVERED IN THE THREADS OF SPIDER-SILK.
"SOON SHE WAS WRAPPED ALL OVER WITH IT, STUCK IN PLACE, INSIDE ANANSI'S DRUM.
"BAST THRASHED AND SCREAMED, BUT ANANSI'S SILK WAS STRONG.
UGH!
"AS POWERFUL AS SHE WAS, BAST NEARLY GAVE UP.
"BUT THEN SHE REALIZED ANANSI'S WEB HAD NOT COVERED HER WHOLE BODY.
"ONE CLAW ON ONE PAW HAD BEEN LEFT FREE.
HNNG!
KNULL IS... BETTER...THAN ALL OF US, BROTHER. KNULL CAME...BEFORE MAGIC...BEFORE SCIENCE...
BEFORE... LIFE!

AAA!
SLICE
YOU ARE NOT MY SISTER!
YOU ARE A POWERFUL ENTITY, IMPOSSIBLY ADAPTIVE, BUT YOU HAVE VULNERABILITIES.
ELECTRO-MAGNETISM. HIGH FREQUENCY VIBRATION.
WAKANDA MASTERED BOTH CENTURIES AGO.
"MASTERED"? HA! EVEN YOUR PRECIOUS BARRIER SHIELD COULDN'T KEEP OUT KNULL.
HAHAHAHA!
KNULL WILL EAT YOU AS HE HAS EATEN YOUR BELOVED AND YOUR SISTER! KNULL WILL EAT YOUR WORLD!
I THINK NOT.
THE BARRIER FAILED AS A SHIELD, BUT IT WILL MAKE AN EXCELLENT AMPLIFIER.

GOODBYE, KNULL.
"BAST STOPPED SCREAMING.

"BAST STOPPED TWISTING.
"BAST STOPPED THRASHING.
"WITH HER ONE CLAW, SHE BEGAN TO SCRATCH ANANSI'S WEB.
"CUTTING THROUGH IT, BIT BY BIT--
"--UNTIL SHE WAS FREE."

"DO YOU SEE THE LESSON, T'CHALLA?"
"I DO, FATHER.
"I WAS SMALL. I WAS OUTNUMBERED.
"LIKE WAKANDA."
"AND IS WAKANDA *WEAK*? IS WAKANDA *DEFEATED*?"
"NO, FATHER. NEVER."
"AND WHY IS THAT, MY SON?"
"BECAUSE NO MATTER THE OBSTACLE, NO MATTER THE CHALLENGE, WE USE THE *CLAW WE HAVE* TO WIN."
"AND *WHO* IS WAKANDA, T'CHALLA?"

SO IT WORKED? IS WAKANDA--
YES, SHURI.
"THE BLACK PANTHER IS WAKANDA."
WAKANDA IS FOREVER.

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #1

IN THE DEPTHS

"TO THE DEPTHS WE CONDEMN YOU.
"TO THE DEPTHS, THE COLD, THE DARKNESS, FOR ALL TIME.
"FOR YOUR CRIMES.
"FOR YOUR EVIL.

"YOU ARE HEREBY CAST FROM US.
"STRIPPED OF YOUR NAMES.
"STRIPPED FROM OUR MEMORIES.
"STRIPPED FROM OUR HEARTS.
"FOREVER."
WE WILL RETURN, LITTLE PRINCE.
WE WILL RETURN TO KILL.
WE WILL NEVER STOP.
DO YOU HEAR ME, LITTLE PRINCE?
WE WILL KILL!
AND KILL! AND--
"YOU ARE CONDEMNED. UNTIL THE END OF TIME AND BEYOND."
IT WAS SO LONG AGO.

SO LONG AGO.
AND YET, SOMETIMES IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY YESTERDAY.
WE WERE IN THE ORREKI REEFS, WELL NORTH OF ATLANTIS' THEN ANTARCTIC CAPITAL-- THE SEASONAL HOME OF THE CHASM PEOPLE.
TCHA-HAH!
AND I WAS SO VERY YOUNG.
SHE'S--
SHE'S SO--
IN THE DEPTHS

ADMIRING THE LOCAL SCENERY, PRINCE NAMOR?
WHAT? NO! I'M NOT, I'M--
DORMA!
AND AMBROSE, TOO!
BLIF!
HE'S THE ONE WHO FOUND YOU OGLING THAT POOR GIRL...!
HMF! HAVE A CARE, DORMA. YOU MAY BE A LADY-IN-TRAINING, BUT I AM STILL THE CROWN PRINCE. AND THAT'S NOT WHAT WAS GOING ON AT ALL!
SHE WAS DOING HER MORNING PRACTICE ROUTINE, AND I COULDN'T HELP BUT WATCH. TAKE A CLOSER LOOK--SEE IF YOU RECOGNIZE HER NOW.
RECOG--? OH!
OH, THAT'S SWEET MERCY!
NONE OTHER.
HO, IMPERIALS!
AND-- IMMANU'S BEARD, LOOK!
IT'S THE REST OF THE SWIFT TIDE!
THE SWIFT TIDE!

PRINCE NAMOR, ISN'T IT? YOUR PEOPLE SAID YOU MIGHT BE OUT THIS WAY. AND...LADY DORMA, I WAGER?
Y-YES, THAT'S US!
AND YOU'RE--
KHARSA, DAUGHTER OF KHASRAN OF THE IMPERIAL CITY. CAPTAIN OF THIS MERRY THRONG, FOR MY SINS.
WE DID NOT EXPECT TO BE IN THESE WATERS DURING YOUR VISIT, BUT WE FOUND INFORMATION THAT YOUR COURT WIZARD MUST HEAR RIGHT AWAY.
O-OF COURSE! COURT WIZARD SYZANDIAS-- THAT'S SYCORAX'S GRANDFATHER, ISN'T IT?
YOU STAY WELL INFORMED.
IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, PRINCE NAMOR--AND YOU, DORMA, AS WELL.
PERHAPS WE'LL SEE YOU AGAIN LATER.
UNTIL THEN, COOL WATERS AND FAVORABLE CURRENTS TO YOU!
COOL WATERS...
KHARSA... LEADER OF THE SWIFT TIDE.
SHE SHOOK MY HAND...
FIRST TIME, HM?
WH--?

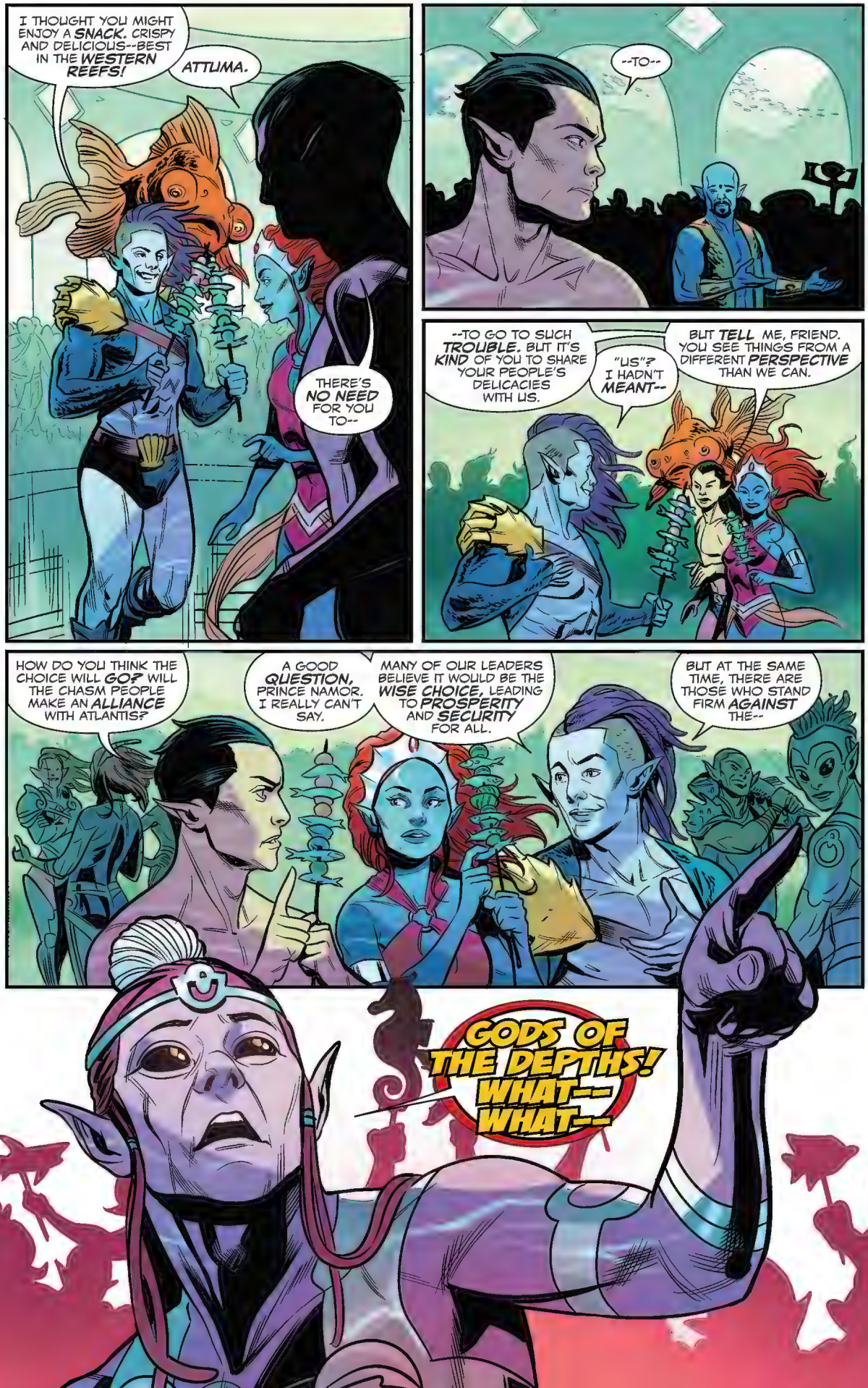
GOOD DAY, PRINCE. LADY.
I AM CALLED ATTUMA, SON OF ATTUKAR OF THE CHASM PEOPLE.
...CHIEF ATTUKAR?
BLRF?
I'VE ONLY MET THE RIDERS OF THE SWIFT TIDE A FEW TIMES, MYSELF.
BUT GARANNA THE BREAKER, THE GREATEST OF THEM, GREW UP WITH THE CHASM PEOPLE.
OH?
I GRANT YOU, THE BREAKER'S DEEDS ARE MIGHTY, BUT THE GREATEST OF THEM?
KHARSA OF THE IMPERIALS LEADS THE TIDE FOR A REASON, AFTER ALL. AND SYCORAX-- HER SORCERY MAKES HER A MATCH FOR ANY!
WHY, THREE TIMES THEY STOPPED ASSASSINS AT THE GATES--BEFORE YOUR GARANNA EVER JOINED!
AH, YOU IMPERIALS. ALWAYS SURE YOUR WARRIORS ARE THE BEST...
...EVEN IF IT BLINDS YOU TO THE TRUTH.
I MEAN, WHO'S TO SAY THOSE ASSASSINS WOULD EVEN HAVE REACHED THE GATES WITH GARANNA AROUND? EH, LADY DORMA?
WELL, I--
BUT I'LL FREELY ADMIT THIS: THE IMPERIAL CITY DOES HOLD SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN ALL THE SEAS, AND THAT'S NO LIE.
HEY NOW--!

WE HAD BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH THE CHASM PEOPLE TO JOIN ATLANTIS AS ONE OF THE IMPERIAL REALMS. IT WAS TIME TO SEAL THE TREATY...
...AND WE WERE THERE WITH A FULL DELEGATION.
THIS IS TROUBLING NEWS INDEED. THE SURFACE MEN, SO CLOSE TO AN ARTIFACT OF SUCH GREAT POWER.
WHAT SAY YOU, SYZANDIAS?
WHAT SAY I, KRANG? WHAT DO YOU THINK?
WE MUST ACT-- RAPIDLY! THE REALM IS IN GRAVE DANGER EVERY MOMENT WE DELAY! THE REALM? PFAH! THE OCEANS THEMSELVES, AND MORE!
I CONCUR, WISE ONE. AS WARLORD, I SHALL SPEAK TO ATTUKAR, AND--
HO, KRANG! THE SWIFT TIDE SAID THERE WAS NEWS...
AH, NAMOR! LADY DORMA! AND AMBROSE, OF COURSE.
HOW HAS YOUR DAY GONE? YOU MET THE TIDE?
NAMOR MET ATTUMA, TOO--AND THEY DIDN'T GET ALONG SO WELL!
PFF. HARDLY FAIR, DORMA.
I TRIED TO BE POLITE, BUT THAT PUMPED-UP PUFFERFISH IS SUCH A--

AHEM. A WORD, NAMOR, IF YOU WOULD?
ATTUMA, AS A CHIEFTAIN'S SON, IS A PRINCE, OF SORTS, AND I DO HEAR THEY OCCASIONALLY TEND TO ARROGANCE. BUT--
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THAT I AM--
NO, NO. A LIGHT JEST, NO MORE. BUT CONSIDER THIS:
IF WE DO BRING THE CHASM PEOPLE INTO THE EMPIRE...
...ATTUMA WILL ONE DAY BE AN IMPORTANT ALLY. SO FOR THE PEOPLE'S SAKE, AND YOUR GRANDFATHER'S PEACE OF MIND...
...IT IS BEST IF PRINCES FIND A WAY TO GET ALONG. DO YOU FOLLOW ME?
OF COURSE. I UNDERSTAND.
EXCELLENT. I WAS SURE YOU WOULD.
NOW GO, GET READY. IT WILL SOON BE TIME--
RAAA!
ATLANTIS! ATLANTIS!
HRAAA!
"--FOR THE WELCOMING CEREMONY."
YAAAA!

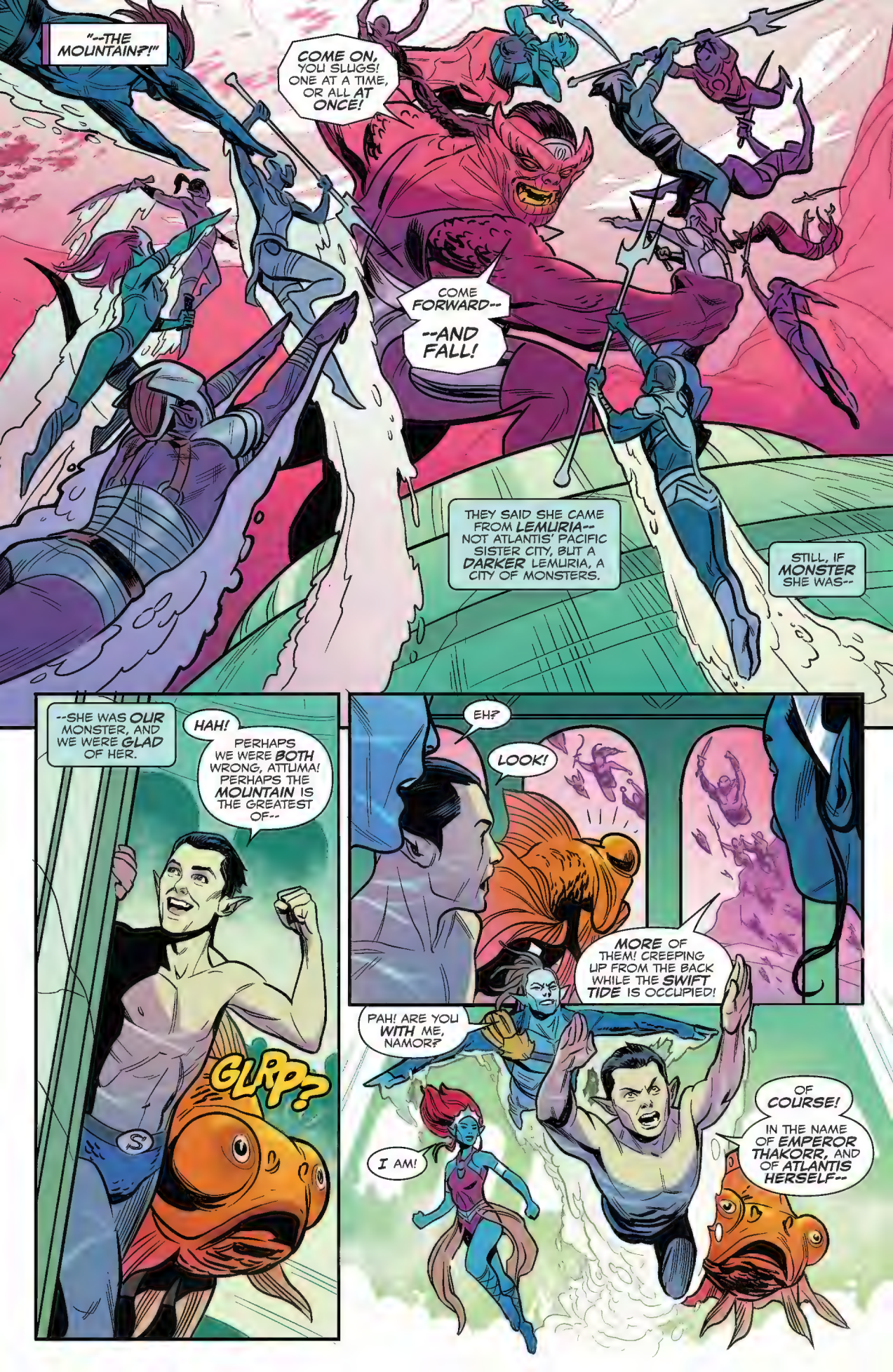
MY PEOPLE!
BY THE GRACE OF THE CURRENTS, WE ARE TOGETHER, SAFE AND WELL! ANOTHER CIRCUIT OF THE OCEAN'S WAYS--AND ANOTHER GOOD YEAR!
HRAA! YAAA! AT-TU-KAR! AT-TU-KAR!
WE HAVE GATHERED AS OUR TRAVELS TAKE US--AND GATHERED FOR SOLEMN PURPOSE, TOO! AND WE ARE BLESSED--
--NOT ONLY BY THE PRESENCE OF OUR FRIENDS FROM ATLANTIS, BUT BY THE SWIFT TIDE AS WELL, WHO PROTECT NOT JUST ATLANTIS--
--BUT ALL SEA PEOPLES WHO LIVE IN PEACE!
WE HONOR YOU, MIGHTY WARRIORS!
MOST KIND, SIR!
SWIFT TIDE!
AT-TU-KAR!
AND NOW, LET US SHARE WITH OUR CITY-BORN VISITORS SOMETHING FEW OUTSIDE THE CHASMS EVER GET TO SEE--
RAAA--
HRAAA--
RAAA--

HFAAAAAAAA
IT WAS A GREAT SEA DRAGON.
ONE OF THE RAREST AND MIGHTIEST OF ALL SEA CREATURES, AND THE CHASM PEOPLE'S MOST SACRED SYMBOL.
A SYMBOL OF THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR SPIRIT, THEIR COURAGE. IF THEY WERE WILLING TO SHOW US THIS...
QUITE A SIGHT, DORMA.
SHE IS MAGNIFICENT, MY PRINCE. SUCH A--
THERE YOU ARE, DORMA!


I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ENJOY A SNACK. CRISPY AND DELICIOUS--BEST IN THE WESTERN REEFS!
ATTUMA.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO--
--TO--
--TO GO TO SUCH TROUBLE. BUT IT'S KIND OF YOU TO SHARE YOUR PEOPLE'S DELICACIES WITH US.
"US"? I HADN'T MEANT--
BUT TELL ME, FRIEND. YOU SEE THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE THAN WE CAN.
HOW DO YOU THINK THE CHOICE WILL GO? WILL THE CHASM PEOPLE MAKE AN ALLIANCE WITH ATLANTIS?
A GOOD QUESTION, PRINCE NAMOR. I REALLY CAN'T SAY.
MANY OF OUR LEADERS BELIEVE IT WOULD BE THE WISE CHOICE, LEADING TO PROSPERITY AND SECURITY FOR ALL.
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THERE ARE THOSE WHO STAND FIRM AGAINST THE--
GODS OF THE DEPTHS! WHAT-- WHAT--

THEY CAME OVER THE REEFS, WITH ALMOST NO WARNING.
DEATH!
DEATH TO THE OPPRESSORS! SLAUGHTER THEM ALL!
SHOW THEM! SHOW THE ATLANTEANS! THEIR TENTACLES CLUTCH FOR US--
BUT THE CHASM PEOPLE WILL NEVER BOW TO THEM!
BUT...
RISE, TIDE!
HAD WE NOT BEEN HERE, THEY MIGHT HAVE SUCCEEDED--
--BUT THE SWIFT TIDE WILL NOT ALLOW IT! RISE!
RISE!
RISE!
IT WAS AMAZING--

--TO SEE THEM IN ACTION.
SYCORAX, ON OUR FLANK! GARANNA, ABOVE!
KHARSA, COMMANDING, FIERCE.
SYCORAX, WHOSE MAGIC STRUCK LIKE MORAYS.
AH-AH! NOT SO FAST!
UHH!
NH!
HLKK!
SWEET MERCY, WHO ACTUALLY LAUGHED AS SHE OPENED MEN'S THROATS.
HFF!
GKK!
GARANNA, WHO SHOWED WHY THEY CALLED HER THE BREAKER.
TOLAN'S BONES! THEY'RE--
I HAD NO IDEA THEY COULD FIGHT LIKE THAT! NO IDEA ANYONE COULD!
BUT--WHERE IS THE FIFTH OF THEM? THE ONE THEY CALL--


"--THE MOUNTAIN?!"
COME ON, YOU SLUGS! ONE AT A TIME, OR ALL AT ONCE!
COME FORWARD--
--AND FALL!
THEY SAID SHE CAME FROM LEMURIA-- NOT ATLANTIS' PACIFIC SISTER CITY, BUT A DARKER LEMURIA, A CITY OF MONSTERS.
STILL, IF MONSTER SHE WAS--
--SHE WAS OUR MONSTER, AND WE WERE GLAD OF HER.
HAH!
PERHAPS WE WERE BOTH WRONG, ATTUMA! PERHAPS THE MOUNTAIN IS THE GREATEST OF--
GLRP?
EH?
LOOK!
MORE OF THEM! CREEPING UP FROM THE BACK WHILE THE SWIFT TIDE IS OCCUPIED!
PAH! ARE YOU WITH ME, NAMOR?
I AM!
OF COURSE!
IN THE NAME OF EMPEROR THAKORR, AND OF ATLANTIS HERSELF--

--IMPERIUS REX!
AND FOR THE CHASM AS WELL, TRAITORS!
HERE, YOU WON'T NEED THIS--
--WHILE I HAVE A USE FOR IT!
OH, LOOK, IT'S THE LITTLE LADY OF ATLANTIS!
THE PRETTY-PRETTY!
I, AH, I WOULDN'T...
OH? AND YOU THINK WE'LL TAKE ORDERS FROM A SOFT THING LIKE YOU?
WELL...
GOMPP
htt
hh

...DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU!
I'M NO HELPLESS COURT DAMSEL, SLIME...
I AM DORMA--OF ATLANTIS!
H-AKKH!
BUT NO--HOLD, HOLD! STOP THIS MADNESS!
I KNOW YOU, RONAL! AND YOU, EITHYS! I KNOW YOUR FAMILIES! IT'S NOT YOUR WAY TO GO AGAINST THE TRIBE!
BAH! THE TRIBE! YOU WILL DIE, ATLANTIS-LOVING SCUM--AND YOUR SIMPERING FATHER DIES NEXT!
OH. THAT'S HOW IT IS, IS IT?
WELL, THEN--
AND, IN A FEW, FRENZIED MOMENTS...

HAH!
THE COWARDS FLEE--THOSE WHO STILL CAN!
WE THOUGHT TO GO AFTER THEM, BUT--
HRAAA!
RAA! ATTUMA! NAMOR! DORMA! HRAA! ATLANTIS! YAA!
WH-WHAT?
WELL FOUGHT, YOUNG ONES!
OUR THANKS FOR THE TIMELY ASSISTANCE!
YAR. GOOD WORK.
WE'LL BRING BACK THE FUGITIVES. BUT YOU--ALL OF YOU--
--YOU DO YOUR PEOPLE PROUD!
THE-- THE SWIFT TIDE--
THEY THANKED US!

WELL, NOW. THAT GIVES ME AN IDEA.
SYZANDIAS, CHIEF ATTUKAR... IF I COULD HAVE A WORD...?
AND SOON--
MY PEOPLE. MY FRIENDS.
TODAY WE HAVE SURVIVED TREACHERY AND SEDITION, THANKS TO THE AID OF HEROES--OUR OWN HEROES AND ATLANTIS'.
WOULD THAT WAS ALL THAT HAS OCCURRED TODAY.
BUT NO. THE SWIFT TIDE BROUGHT WORD THIS MORNING.
THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE--THE LAST DARK RELIC OF A TIME BEFORE EVEN WE SWAM THESE SEAS--HAS BEEN FOUND. OR, AT LEAST, THE TRAIL OF IT.
ITS POWER IS DARK AND VILE. ITS VERY EXISTENCE IMPERILS US ALL, BE WE TRIBESMAN OR IMPERIAL.
IT MUST BE RECOVERED. IT MUST BE DEALT WITH, ONCE AND FOR ALL TIME.
AND SO I TELL YOU TODAY...
...THAT THE SWIFT TIDE'S NEXT MISSION WILL BE THE RETRIEVAL OF THE STONE, WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED.
BUT THAT TOO IS NOT ALL.

AS A GESTURE OF THANKS FOR THEIR AID TODAY-- AND AS A SYMBOL OF THE GROWING BOND BETWEEN ATLANTIS AND THE CHASM-FOLK--
--MY SON, ATTUMA, AND THE CROWN PRINCE OF ATLANTIS, NAMOR, WILL JOIN THE TIDE ON THEIR HEROIC MISSION!
WE'RE GOING, NAMOR! WITH THE TIDE!
US! WITH THE TIDE!
HMPH.
AMBROSE AND I-- WE HELPED, TOO! BUT DO WE GET TO GO...?
REST EASY, LADY DORMA. MEN MAY FORGET WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO--AS WE OF THE TIDE HAVE ALL HAD REASON TO KNOW--
--BUT I'M SURE WE CAN FIND ROOM FOR A SPIRITED YOUNG ATLANTEAN AND HER FISH.
R-REALLY?
ORKK!
NAMOR! ATTUMA! DORMA! THE TIDE! HRAAAA!
AND SO IT WAS SET.
I REMEMBER THE PRIDE I FELT. AND THE CERTAINTY-- THE ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY...
...THIS WAS GOING TO BE AMAZING!

IT WAS ALL SO LONG AGO.
AND NOW--
NOW--
I DO NOT LIKE TO THINK OF WHAT WILL COME NEXT.

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #2

SWIFT AND SURE

WE TRAVELED. NORTHWARD.
THE SWIFT TIDE SHARED TALES OF THEIR ADVENTURES. WE VISITED VILLAGES ALONG OUR PATH.
AND AT TIMES--
MOTHER OF DRAGONS!
NO! NO--
--THERE WAS WORK TO BE DONE.
BANDITS!
TO THE CAVES! THE CAVES!
BUT WE ARE NOT READY-- WE HAVEN'T SECURED THE HARVEST!
THEY'LL-- THEY'LL KILL US ALL!
ALL? NO, THAT WOULD BE FOOLISH. BUT ENOUGH OF YOU SERVE AS A MESSAGE.
EH?!
DO NOT RESIST US! GIVE UP YOUR FOOD! OR THE PRICE--

GO ON.
YOU WERE SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT PAYING A PRICE?
SWIFT AND SURE
THE SWIFT TIDE! SLAY THEM, QUICKLY, OR--
AIRKKH!
OR WHAT, MY DEAR? "OR I'LL FALL LIKE WEEDS BEFORE THE SCYTHE"? IS THAT WHAT YOU MEANT TO SAY?
WAS THAT...
...WAS THAT MEANT TO BE A JOKE, SYCORAX?
HTNH!
AH WELL. AT LEAST YOU TRIED.

PRESS ON! WE OUTNUMBER THEM!
SURELY WE CAN OVERWHELM THEM!
OH, MY POOR LITTLE DOOMED SEA SLUG. OUTNUMBER US? I AM NOT FAMED FOR MY SKILL WITH NUMBERS--
--BUT I FEAR YOU DO NOT EVEN OUTNUMBER ME.
HO, SWIFT MERCY? DO YOU FEEL OUTNUMBERED?
HNHH!
OH, YES, MOUNTAIN! VERY MUCH SO! BUT--
-GHK-
--A LITTLE LESS NOW!
PF!
BUT PERHAPS GARANNA'S OVERWHELMED. DO YOU NEED HELP, BREAKER?
HELP?
GHH!
DO I LOOK LIKE I NEED HELP?
HGG!
BUT THIS TIME, ATTUMA, DORMA AND I--WE DID NOT FIGHT A TREASONOUS SNEAK ATTACK LIKE BEFORE. THIS TIME--

BOTTOM-FEEDERS! SEA SLIME!
FOR ATLANTIS! FOR THE EMPIRE!
--WE FOUGHT AS FULL-FLEDGED ALLIES OF THE TIDE.
UHH!
GH!
HNH. YES, OF COURSE.
FOR THE GLORY OF EMPIRE, THEN.
FORCE THEM BACK, AMBROSE! TEACH THEM A LESSON THEY WON'T SOON FORGET!
STEALING FOOD!
GOMP
OH! TH-THANK YOU!
AHH, LOOK AT THEM GO.
WERE WE EVER THAT YOUNG?
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, KHARSA.
I WAS BORN ANCIENT, AS YOU HAVE MANY TIMES TOLD ME.
THE RAIDERS FALTERED, THEN-- FALTERED AND BROKE.

FLEE, COWARDS! FLEE LONG AND FAR AND DO NOT RETURN!
THERE IS NO PLUNDER FOR YOU HERE THIS SEASON!
AH, YOUNG ATTUMA--
--WE'RE NOT DONE YET. THEY'LL ONLY RETURN AS SOON AS WE'RE GONE, AS I'M SURE YOU KNOW.
COME--
--SEE HOW IT'S DONE!
THE RAIDERS LED US ON A CHASE, BUT TRY AS THEY MIGHT, THEY COULD NOT SLIP AWAY.
WE ALMOST HAD THEM AS WE CRESTED A ROCKY RISE...
HTT!
-FF-
WH- WHAT?
NFF!

IT WAS... I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.
BUT IT STANK OF DEATH AND WORSE. AND ITS POWER STRUCK THROUGH US, HOLDING US FROZEN, TWITCHING. CLAWING AT OUR MINDS, OUR SOULS.
THE PAIN WAS UNIMAGINABLE.
HEROES OF ATLANTIS, HAH!
NONE CAN STOP US--NOT EVEN THE POWER OF THE EMPIRE ITSELF-- WHILE WE HAVE SUCH A FORMIDABLE ELDRITCH SERVANT!
Y-YOU... FOOLS!
THIS IS N-NO... SERVANT! IT IS A HORROR...A CREATURE I H-HAD THOUGHT L-LONG EXTINCT BY NOW! I K-KNOW NOT HOW YOU F-FOUND IT...
...BUT IF YOU TH-THINK YOU ARE ITS MASTERS, YOU ARE...S-SADLY MISTAKEN! YOU F-FEED YOUR OWN P-PEOPLE TO IT AS F-FUEL!
K-KEEP... FEEDING IT...
...AND IT WILL DESTROY YOU ALL!
T-UH!
HH

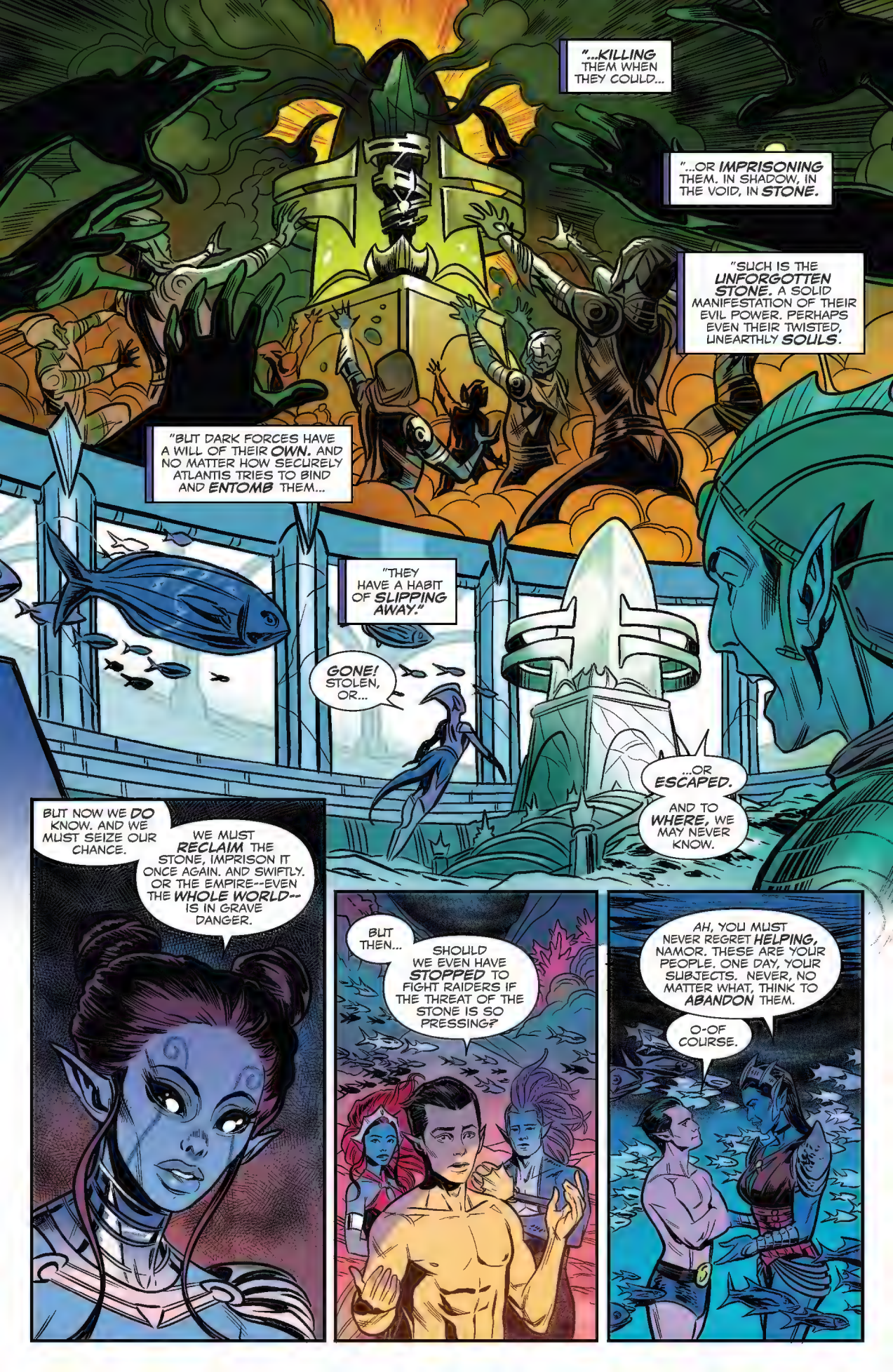
WELL DONE, SYCORAX!
AND NOW THAT YOU HAVE BROKEN ITS HOLD ON US, I SHALL SEE TO IT...
...THAT ITS REIGN OF TERROR ENDS FOREVER! RIGHT HERE...
"...AND RIGHT NOW!"
AND IT SEEMS THE RAIDERS HAVE FLED ONCE AGAIN. SHALL WE--
HRAAA! SWIFT TIDE! SWIFT TIDE! YAAA! HRAAA!
OR PERHAPS NOT.
THEY WILL NOT BE SO BOLD IN THE FUTURE, THOSE THAT REMAIN.
AND THEIR VICTIMS WILL FEEL BETTER IF WE DO NOT ABANDON THEM QUITE SO QUICKLY. COME, FRIENDS, LET US REASSURE THEM.
LOOK AT THEM, NAMOR. IT'S LIKE THE STORIES I'VE READ IN THE HISTORY SCROLLS BUT HAPPENING NOW. HERE!
AND TO THINK WE WERE PART OF IT!
WE WERE, WE WERE. QUITE SOMETHING, ATTUMA, EH?
AH, YES.
QUITE... SOMETHING.

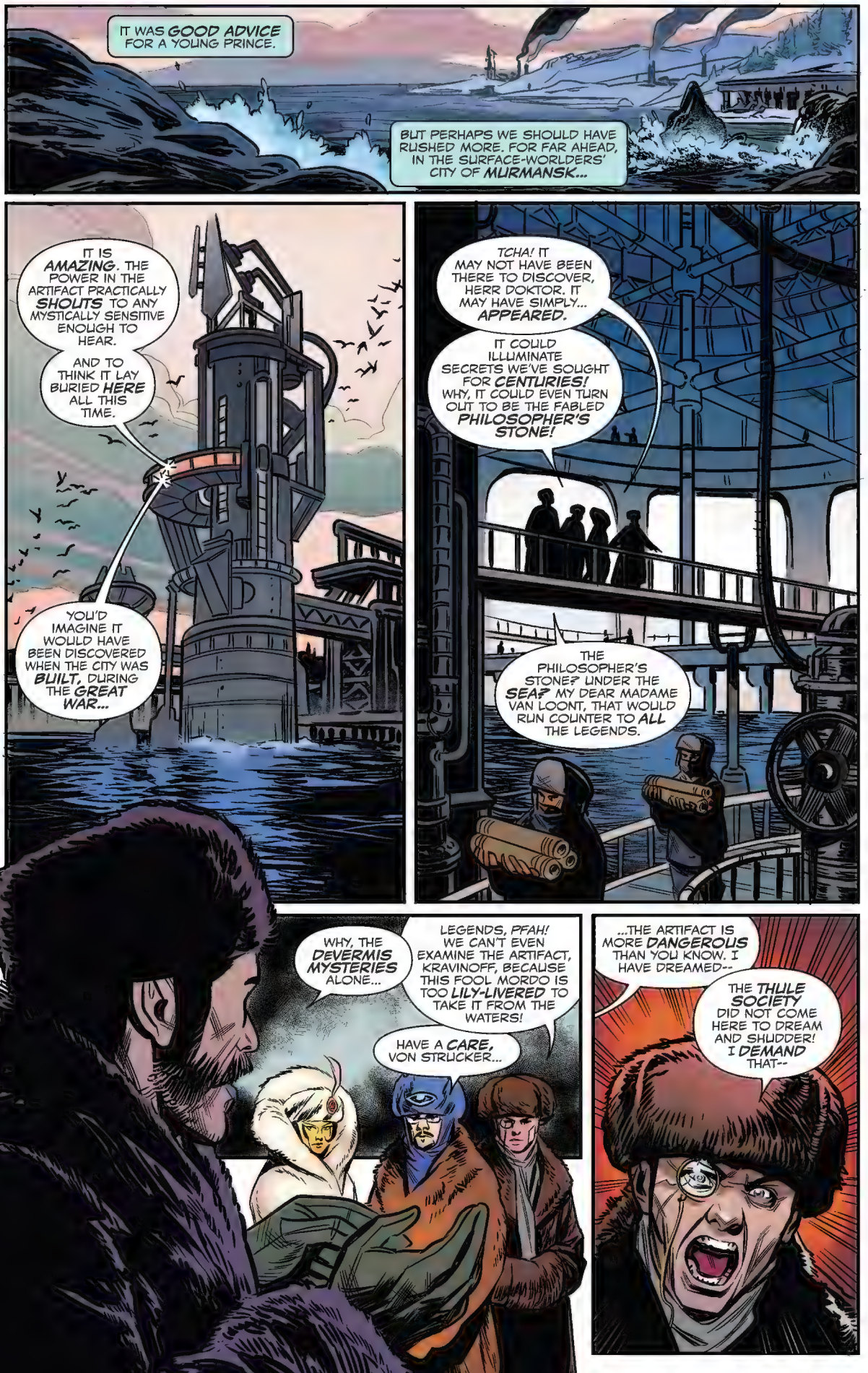
THE FARM VILLAGE WANTED TO THROW US A BANQUET IN THANKS FOR SAVING THEM. BUT GIVEN OUR NUMBERS...
...AND THE SIZE OF THE IMPERIAL DETACHMENT WE HAD WITH US, KHARSA DECLINED, URGING THEM TO SAVE THEIR FOOD. SO WE TRAVELED ONWARD...
YOU SEEM TROUBLED, ATTUMA. IS SOMETHING WRONG?
IT'S NOTHING, NAMOR. IT'S JUST...
...IT'S HARD FOR ME TO FULLY CONDEMN THOSE RAIDERS WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES THEY COULD HAVE BEEN MY OWN PEOPLE.
HUH? BUT-- THEY'RE BANDITS! THIEVES!
THE CHASM PEOPLE ARE NOMADS, PRINCE OF THE EMPIRE, AND ATTUMA AND I HAVE LONG EXPERIENCE WITH THEM.
THEY FOLLOW THE SEASONAL CURRENTS, BUT THERE ARE TIMES FOOD IS SCARCE ALONG THEIR PATH.
YES, GARRA. THERE ARE.
THE OCEAN CAN BE A COLD PLACE, IF ALL YOU HAVE IS HUNGER AND WEAPONRY.
I HAD NO IDEA! HIS LIFE...IT MUST HAVE BEEN SO DIFFERENT FROM OURS...
THAT...MAY BE THE BEST PART OF THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN ATLANTIS AND THE CHASM PEOPLE.
BOTH SIDES HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER.
THAT'S TRUE, ATTUMA. WE EXTEND OUR REACH, AND YOU...YOU'LL NEVER BE ALONE, WITH THE EMPIRE TO BACK YOU UP.
YES. I KNOW...

I MUST SAY, DORMA, YOUR PET IS QUITE EFFECTIVE IN BATTLE. HIS NAME IS AMBROSE?
YES, AND HE'S JUST THE BEST! AREN'T YOU, AMBROSE? AREN'T YOU?
THE COURT SORCERERS MAGICKED HIM UP WITH THOSE POWERS, BECAUSE HE WAS SO LOYAL AND PROTECTIVE.
AND HE JUST LOVES TO BE SCRATCHED UNDER THE CHIN, DON'T YOU?
BLB BLB BLB!
HA! YOU'LL HAVE TO GET USED TO THE IMPERIAL WOMEN TOO, ATTUMA!
I...DARESAY I COULD DO THAT.
SCRITCHY SCRITCHY SCRITCH SCRATCH SCRITCH...
THEY'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM THE CHASM GIRLS...
OH! BUT I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT MAGIC, SYCORAX!
IS IT AS HARD TO LEARN AS THEY SAY? BECAUSE WE STUDIED IT A LITTLE AT COURT, AND MY TUTORS TOLD ME I HAD A GENUINE TALENT FOR IT!
BUT IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE ANYONE COULD LEARN TO BE MORE POWERFUL THAN THAT AWFUL THING YOU BESTED...
IT CAN BE QUITE TIME-CONSUMING TO LEARN MAGIC, MY LADY, EVEN FOR THOSE WITH TALENT.
AND I DOUBT YOUR DUTIES AT COURT WOULD ALLOW FOR IT.
BUT I AM NOT MORE POWERFUL THAN THAT CREATURE. I WAS SIMPLY...MORE RESOURCEFUL.

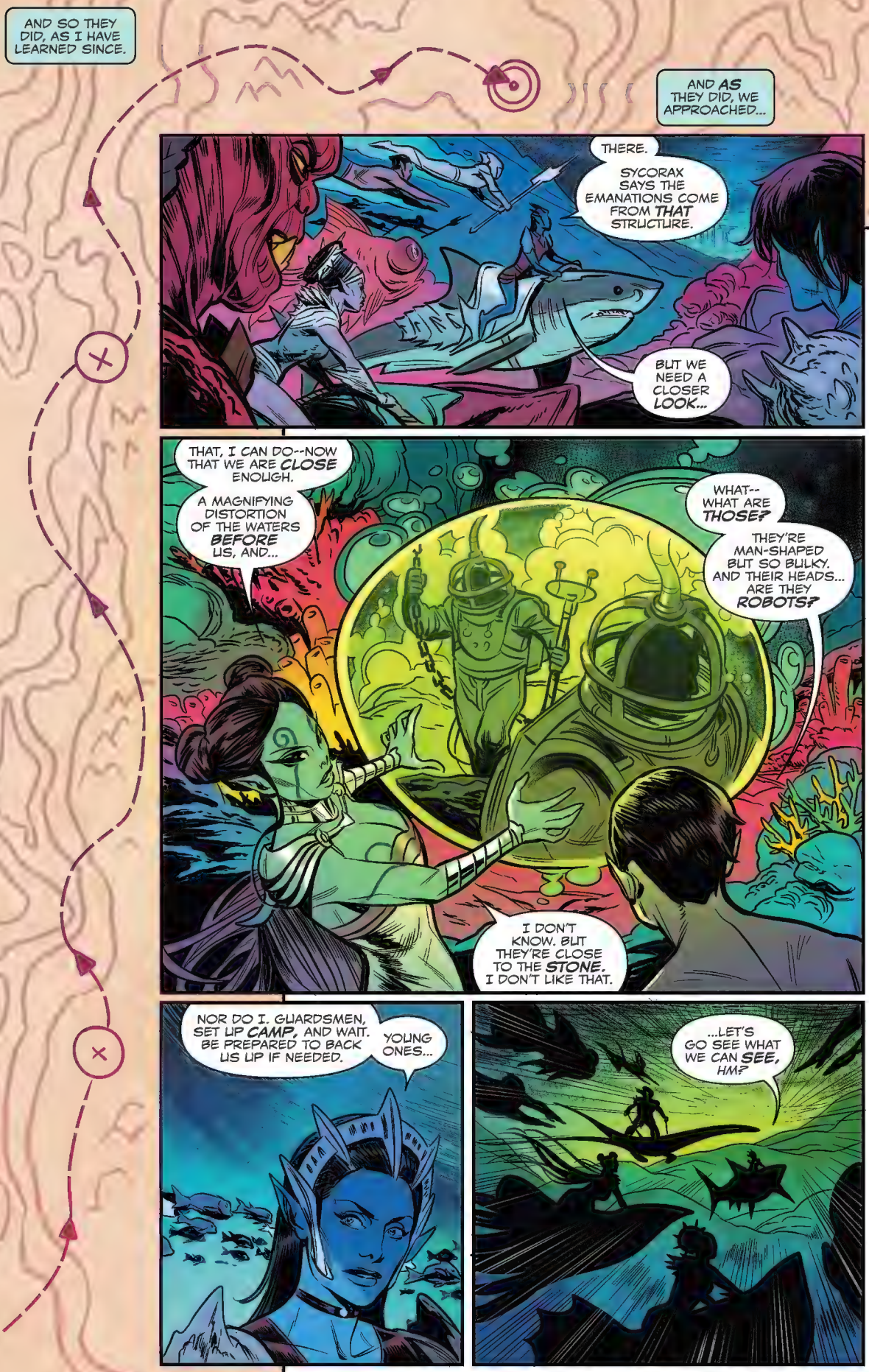
MAGIC IS RARELY ABOUT RAW POWER. IT IS MUCH MORE ABOUT WILL. AND ABOUT INFLUENCING POWER, SHAPING IT AS IT FLOWS.
AND ABOUT CHARACTER AS WELL. THE FORCES A SPELLWORKER WIELDS MUST RESPECT YOU, LISTEN TO YOU, AS THE CREATURE'S POWER DID TO ME.
POWER ALONE IS A MERE BEGINNING. WHICH IS A GOOD THING.
A GOOD THING? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I WAS THINKING OF THE RELIC WE SEEK, PRINCE NAMOR. THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE.
IF POWER WAS ALL THAT MATTERED, WE'D HAVE NO CHANCE AGAINST IT. INDEED, WE WOULD BE ENSLAVED TO IT, IF WE EXISTED AT ALL.
IT IS ANCIENT, DEADLY...
"...A DREAD, MALEVOLENT THING, FAR, FAR OLDER THAN THE EMPIRE.
"OLDER...AND HUNGRIER.
"FOR AS YOU MAY HAVE LEARNED IN ATLANTIS' IMPERIAL SCHOOLS...
"...ATLANTIS WAS NOT THE FIRST TO RULE BELOW THE WAVES.
"NOR THE MIGHTIEST.

"FIRST CAME THE GREAT OLD ONES...
"...NEAR-GODS FROM THE OUTER DARK, BEYOND REALITY ITSELF.
"THEY ENSLAVED THE DEEPS FOR COLD AEONS OF PAIN, OF BLOOD MAGIC AND INSANITY.
"THEY BUILT GREAT CITIES, VAST AND FORBIDDING, LIKE DEEP R'LYEH...
"...AND THEY SPAWNED TERRIBLE CREATURES, SOME OF WHOM LURK IN THE SHADOWED REALMS EVEN NOW.
"AND WHEN THE ATLANTEANS CAME...
"...THEY WARRED BRAVELY AGAINST THE DARK ONES, FOR MILLENNIA OF STRUGGLE. DRIVING THEM BACK, DRIVING THEM INTO THE DEPTHS...


"...KILLING THEM WHEN THEY COULD...
"...OR IMPRISONING THEM. IN SHADOW, IN THE VOID, IN STONE.
"SUCH IS THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE. A SOLID MANIFESTATION OF THEIR EVIL POWER. PERHAPS EVEN THEIR TWISTED, UNEARTHLY SOULS.
"BUT DARK FORCES HAVE A WILL OF THEIR OWN. AND NO MATTER HOW SECURELY ATLANTIS TRIES TO BIND AND ENTOMB THEM...
"THEY HAVE A HABIT OF SLIPPING AWAY."
GONE! STOLEN, OR...
...OR ESCAPED.
AND TO WHERE, WE MAY NEVER KNOW.
BUT NOW WE DO KNOW. AND WE MUST SEIZE OUR CHANCE.
WE MUST RECLAIM THE STONE, IMPRISON IT ONCE AGAIN. AND SWIFTLY. OR THE EMPIRE--EVEN THE WHOLE WORLD--IS IN GRAVE DANGER.
BUT THEN...
SHOULD WE EVEN HAVE STOPPED TO FIGHT RAIDERS IF THE THREAT OF THE STONE IS SO PRESSING?
AH, YOU MUST NEVER REGRET HELPING, NAMOR. THESE ARE YOUR PEOPLE. ONE DAY, YOUR SUBJECTS. NEVER, NO MATTER WHAT, THINK TO ABANDON THEM.
O-OF COURSE.


IT WAS GOOD ADVICE FOR A YOUNG PRINCE.
BUT PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE RUSHED MORE. FOR FAR AHEAD, IN THE SURFACE-WORLDERS' CITY OF MURMANSK...
IT IS AMAZING. THE POWER IN THE ARTIFACT PRACTICALLY SHOUTS TO ANY MYSTICALLY SENSITIVE ENOUGH TO HEAR.
AND TO THINK IT LAY BURIED HERE ALL THIS TIME.
YOU'D IMAGINE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED WHEN THE CITY WAS BUILT, DURING THE GREAT WAR...
TCHA! IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THERE TO DISCOVER, HERR DOKTOR. IT MAY HAVE SIMPLY... APPEARED.
IT COULD ILLUMINATE SECRETS WE'VE SOUGHT FOR CENTURIES! WHY, IT COULD EVEN TURN OUT TO BE THE FABLED PHILOSOPHER'S STONE!
THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE? UNDER THE SEA? MY DEAR MADAME VAN LOONT, THAT WOULD RUN COUNTER TO ALL THE LEGENDS.
WHY, THE DEVERMIS MYSTERIES ALONE...
LEGENDS, PFAH! WE CAN'T EVEN EXAMINE THE ARTIFACT, KRAVINOFF, BECAUSE THIS FOOL MORDO IS TOO LILY-LIVERED TO TAKE IT FROM THE WATERS!
HAVE A CARE, VON STRUCKER...
...THE ARTIFACT IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU KNOW. I HAVE DREAMED--
THE THULE SOCIETY DID NOT COME HERE TO DREAM AND SHUDDER! I DEMAND THAT--

YOU DEMAND?
DO I NEED TO REMIND YOU, BARON, THAT THE THULE SOCIETY IS HERE BY INVITATION? AS CONSULTANTS?
THIS IS MY OPERATION. NOT YOURS.
AND WE WILL NOT REMOVE THE ARTIFACT FROM THE HARBOR FLOOR, NOT YET.
NOT WHILE WE ARE BEING WARNED THAT DOING SO MIGHT SET OFF AN ENERGY RELEASE THAT COULD OBLITERATE MURMANSK.
WHAT WE ARE DOING, THOUGH, IS PREPARING TO X-RAY THE ARTIFACT, TO SEE WHAT WE CAN LEARN OF ITS STRUCTURE. WILL THAT SUIT YOU, HERR BARON?
HMPH.
FOR NOW, I SUPPOSE.
...
OF COURSE, DIRECTOR VAZHIN.
VERY WELL. GIVE THE ORDER TO PROCEED, BEZUKHOV.
AT ONCE, DIRECTOR VAZHIN.


AND SO THEY DID, AS I HAVE LEARNED SINCE.
AND AS THEY DID, WE APPROACHED...
THERE.
SYCORAX SAYS THE EMANATIONS COME FROM THAT STRUCTURE.
BUT WE NEED A CLOSER LOOK...
THAT, I CAN DO--NOW THAT WE ARE CLOSE ENOUGH.
A MAGNIFYING DISTORTION OF THE WATERS BEFORE US, AND...
WHAT-- WHAT ARE THOSE?
THEY'RE MAN-SHAPED BUT SO BULKY. AND THEIR HEADS... ARE THEY ROBOTS?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT THEY'RE CLOSE TO THE STONE. I DON'T LIKE THAT.
NOR DO I. GUARDSMEN, SET UP CAMP, AND WAIT. BE PREPARED TO BACK US UP IF NEEDED.
YOUNG ONES...
...LET'S GO SEE WHAT WE CAN SEE, HM?

BUT AS WE APPROACHED...
FTOOM
:KAFF:
:KAFF:
WHAT--
IT FELT--
THERE WAS IMPACT AND DARKNESS. BUT BEYOND THAT--
--IT FELT FOUL. LIKE POISON OR THE RADIOACTIVE WASTES WE WOULD COME TO KNOW LATER. BUT MORE...
THE THREE OF YOU! GET BACK! OUT OF RANGE!
BUT--

I SAID GET BACK! TO THE GUARDSMEN!
YOU ARE THE FUTURE FOR OUR PEOPLE! AND--IF WE DON'T RETURN--
--SOMEONE MUST CARRY THE TALE!
BUT-- WE CAN HELP--
SYCORAX!
GO.
SHE DISPENSED WITH US AS EASILY AS YOU'D TOSS ASIDE A SHRIMP SHELL.
AND AS THEY WENT FARTHER IN--
KARTHON'S BONES! WE HAVE TO--
NO, MY PRINCE.
LET THE TIDE INVESTIGATE. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING.
YES, THEY KNEW. AND WE KNEW. BUT WE ALSO KNEW WHAT WE'D FELT WHEN THOSE DARKLING WATERS HAD TOUCHED US--
WHAT--
WHAT'S IN THERE?
--AND IT CHILLED US TO THE MARROW.

ABOVE--
BOZHE MOI, WHAT--?
THE NEW PROBES--THEY SHOULD NOT HAVE HAD THIS EFFECT! YOU SAW THE DATA, VON STRUCKER! IT WAS INERT! TOTALLY INERT!
it...it...
BARON?
it...it rises. so cold... coldcold and deep and... aihhh! it is...it will be... the bloodbloodblood so delicious and so rich and so...
WHAT?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING AB--
AHP--
it...
...EH?
AAAAAAAAAAA
KRMM
NO!
AIEEEEE
FTMM
PLEASE--
DON'T-- DONT--
S-SAVE--

WHAT--WHAT HAPPENED? ONE MOMENT IT WAS COMPLETELY STILL, AND THE NEXT--
SAVE YOUR BREATH, YOU STUPID WOMAN! SAVE YOUR BREATH--
KRKKHH BRKHMMM
--AND RUN!
AND BELOW--
WHAT IS--?
THE DARKNESS-- IT PULSED, LIKE A BEATING HEART.
IT SEEMED TO REACH OUT--THEN TO GATHER INTO ITSELF AGAIN--
AND--

WELL.
WELL, WELL, WELL.
WHERE SHALL WE START?

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #3

THE TIDE HAS TURNED

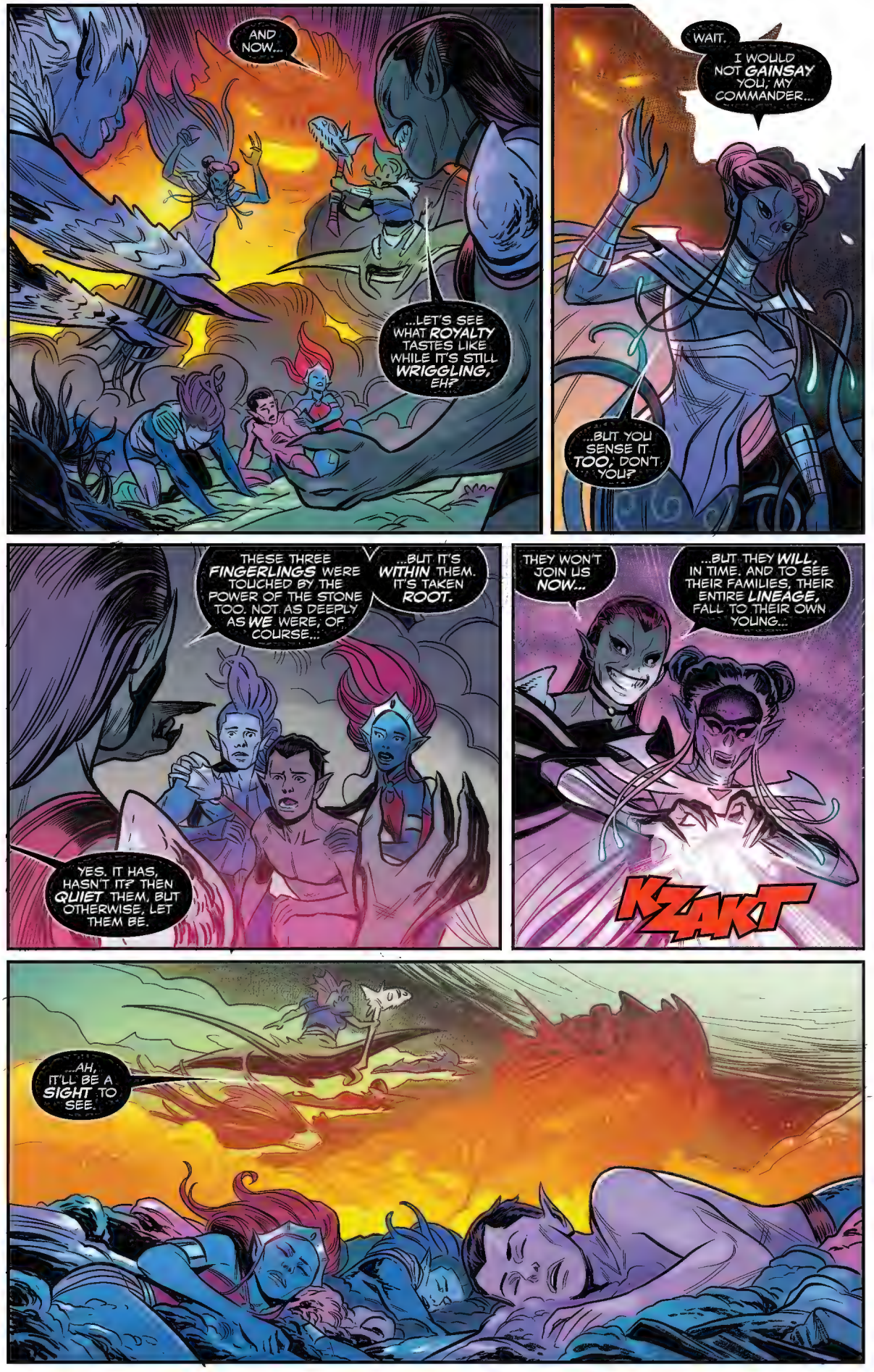
IT WAS TERRIFYING.
THEY WERE TERRIFYING.
HA HA HA HA HA
THE TIDE HAS TURNED
WE HAD TRAVELED WITH THEM, FOUGHT ALONGSIDE THEM--

BUT NOW--
FOR ATLANTIS! FOR THE EMPIRE--FIGHT FREE!
IT'S THE WITCH--SYCORAX! SHE'S GONE MAD!
SLAY HER, BEFORE SHE-- EH?
OH, IT'S NOT JUST "THE WITCH."
HAH!
THEY'RE SO BRAVE. SO MANLY! AND YET..
-HLKK-
WH--?
...STILL SO VULNERABLE!
GHH!
THEIR BODIES HAD MUTATED, MERGING WITH THEIR STEEDS, THEIR WEAPONRY--
GRAAA...
BUT THEIR MINDS, THEIR MANNER--

AAAAAAAAA--
SHRRRKKKKH
HRHH!
--THEY HAD TRULY CHANGED.
IT WAS CHILLING-- HARD TO EVEN COMPREHEND.
BUT OF THEM ALL, THE ONE CALLED THE MOUNTAIN MAY HAVE BEEN THE WORST.
NO
NO
YOU COME TO ME, LITTLE MEN. LITTLE WARRIORS.
I HAVE ROOM FOR YOU WITHIN, YES...
IT WAS AS IF SHE HAD MERGED WITH THE SEAFLOOR ITSELF, AND DREW FIRES FROM DEEP BELOW--
...ROOM FOR YOU ALL!
--ALL THE WAY FROM THE MOLTEN OCEANS AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH!

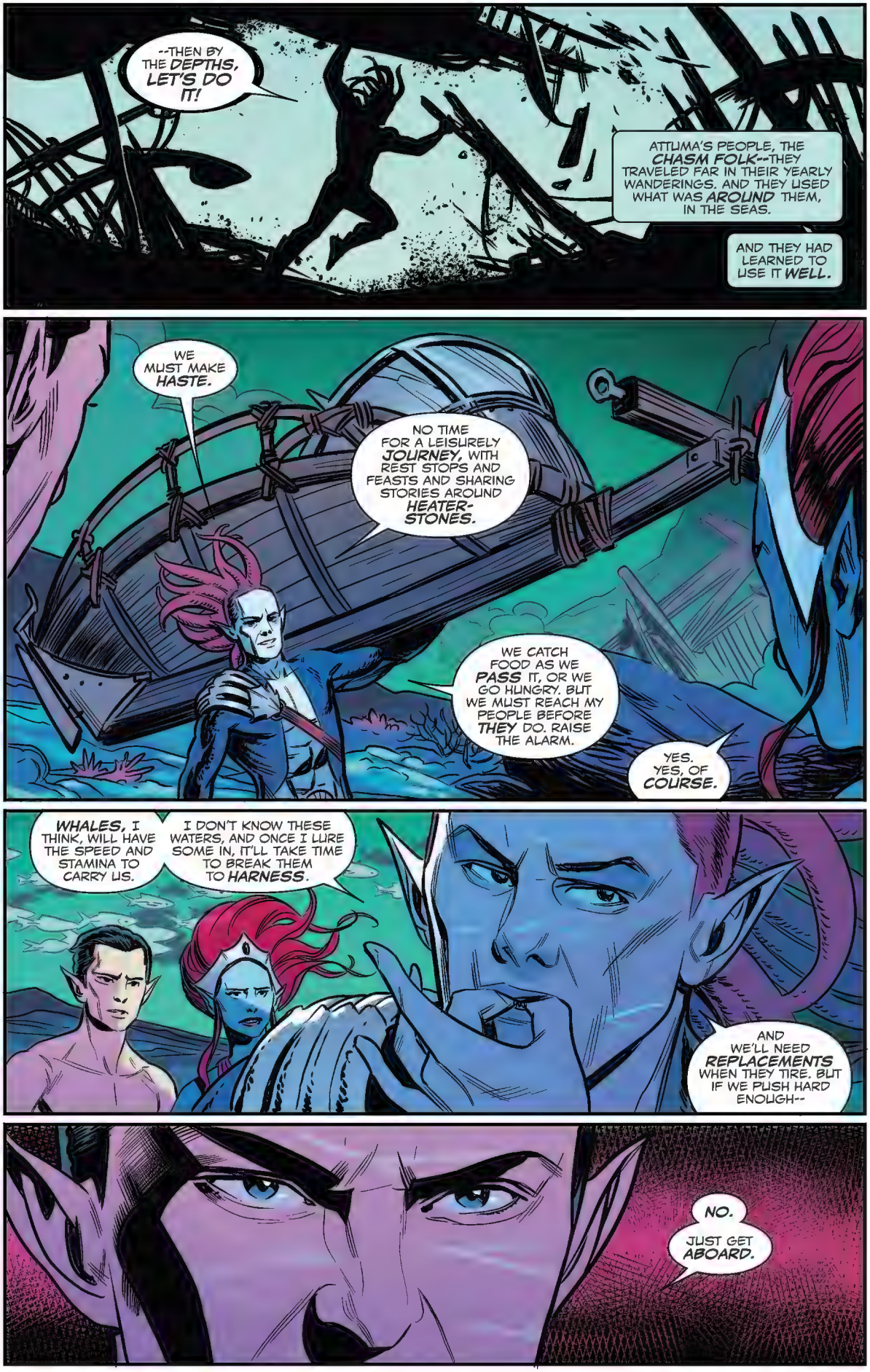
AND WE COULD FEEL IT--
NO!
--COMING FROM THEM IN WAVES--THE UNHOLY JOY THEY FELT, THE BLOODLUST, THE RAW THRILL OF MURDER--
STOP THIS! STOP IT NOW!
--EVEN THE SOULS OF THE DYING, DRAWN TO THEM TO FUEL THEM FURTHER--
REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE AND BREAK FREE FROM THIS SPELL!
YOU ARE KHARSA! LEADER OF THE SWIFT TIDE! HERO OF ATLANTIS!
KHAH!
-HGH!-
CORRECTION, LITTLE PRINCE. WE ARE NO LONGER THE SWIFT TIDE.
WE ARE THE BLACK TIDE NOW--NOW AND FOREVERMORE. AND AS FOR ATLANTIS...
...THE ATLANTIS THAT ORDERED US ABOUT, THAT WOULD SPEND OUR LIVES FOR A SINGLE DAY'S UNEARNED PLEASURES...
OH, THERE'LL BE CHANGES MADE. STARTING WITH--
CHKK
GH!

I-- I DID IT!
SHE'S DEAD! SHE'S--
NNN...
WELL. ISN'T THAT INTERESTING?
KRKH
AMBROSE! STRIKE! STOP HER--STOP ALL OF THEM, BEFORE--
GLKK!
PFF. YOUR PET'S POWERS ARE AMUSING, CHILD...
...BUT THEY WILL NOT HELP YOU HERE.
MOUNTAIN?
SPLAMM

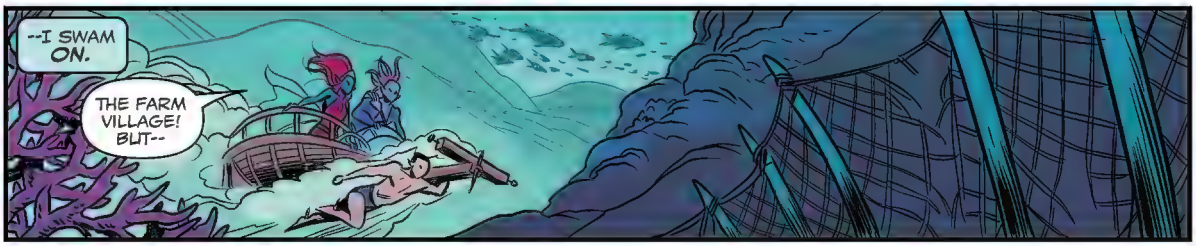

AND NOW...
...LET'S SEE WHAT ROYALTY TASTES LIKE WHILE IT'S STILL WRIGGLING, EH?
WAIT.
I WOULD NOT GAINSAY YOU, MY COMMANDER...
...BUT YOU SENSE IT TOO, DON'T YOU?
THESE THREE FINGERLINGS WERE TOUCHED BY THE POWER OF THE STONE TOO. NOT AS DEEPLY AS WE WERE, OF COURSE...
...BUT IT'S WITHIN THEM. IT'S TAKEN ROOT.
YES. IT HAS, HASN'T IT? THEN QUIET THEM, BUT OTHERWISE, LET THEM BE.
THEY WON'T JOIN US NOW...
...BUT THEY WILL, IN TIME. AND TO SEE THEIR FAMILIES, THEIR ENTIRE LINEAGE, FALL TO THEIR OWN YOUNG...
KZAKT
...AH, IT'LL BE A SIGHT TO SEE.

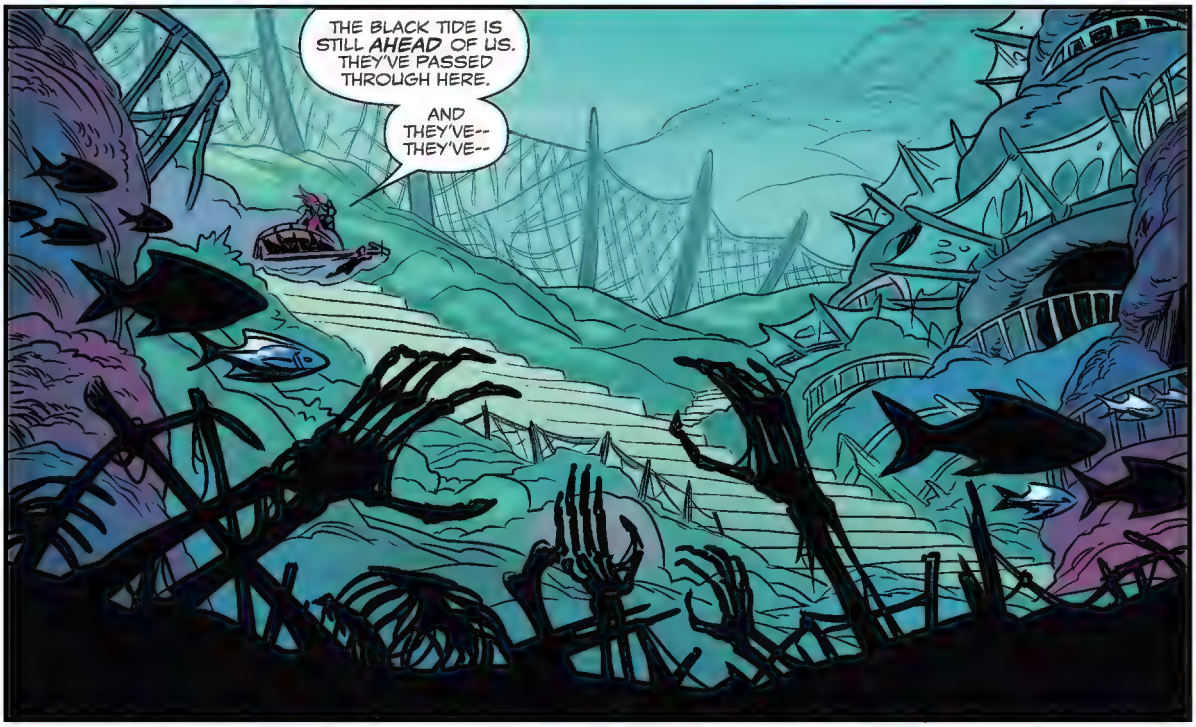
AND BY THE TIME WE AWOKE--
THEY'RE-- THEY'RE GONE.
THERE IT IS. THAT'S WHAT DID IT-- THE DARK POWER THAT ALTERED THEM.
WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?
KHARSA-- BEFORE, BACK WHEN SHE WAS STILL...HERSELF--
--SAID WE WERE THE ONES TO CARRY THE TALE IF ANYTHING WENT WRONG.
BUT THERE MUST BE MORE WE CAN DO.
THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE--IT'S STILL IN THERE. IF WE COULD BRING IT BACK, MAYBE THE COURT WIZARDS COULD FIX THEM, SOMEHOW--
--TURN THEM BACK INTO THEMSELVES!
WAIT HERE, THEN.
I'LL GO FIND IT.
WHAT?
ATTUMA, NO! YOU CAN'T-- YOU SAW WHAT IT DID TO THEM!
BLRT?
UNHAND ME, NAMOR. YOU'RE NOT MY PRINCE, NOT YET-- AND WE NEED THE STONE! WE HAVE TO--

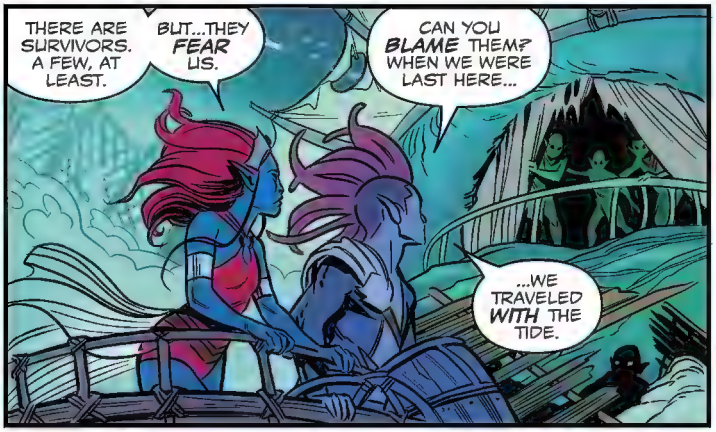
EH?
BLRBLBLBLBRBL...
AMBROSE! NO!
COME BACK! COME BACK BEFORE--
AND WE FELT THAT TOO. WE ALL DID.
NO NO NO NO NO
AS THE POWER OF THE STONE... TOOK AMBROSE. TOOK HIM...
...AND BEGAN TEARING HIM APART.
HE--HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND! HE JUST KNEW WE WANTED SOMETHING IN THAT CLOUD--AND HE'S SO LOYAL, SO EAGER TO PLEASE-- HE JUST--
I KNOW, DORMA. I KNOW.
IT WAS TOO MUCH. THE GUARDS, THE BLACK TIDE, AMBROSE-- AND TO FEEL IT, TO FEEL EVERY DEATH, EVERY TWISTED CHANGE--
--LIKE SOMETHING FOUL CRAWLING IN OUR SPINES, OUR HEARTS, OUR SOULS...
ENOUGH OF THIS.
I WILL NOT JUST FLOAT HERE AND...AND MOURN. I HAVE DONE TOO MUCH MOURNING IN MY LIFE.
IF CARRYING THE TALE IS ALL WE CAN DO--


--THEN BY THE DEPTHS, LET'S DO IT!
ATTUMA'S PEOPLE, THE CHASM FOLK--THEY TRAVELED FAR IN THEIR YEARLY WANDERINGS. AND THEY USED WHAT WAS AROUND THEM, IN THE SEAS.
AND THEY HAD LEARNED TO USE IT WELL.
WE MUST MAKE HASTE.
NO TIME FOR A LEISURELY JOURNEY, WITH REST STOPS AND FEASTS AND SHARING STORIES AROUND HEATER-STONES.
WE CATCH FOOD AS WE PASS IT, OR WE GO HUNGRY. BUT WE MUST REACH MY PEOPLE BEFORE THEY DO. RAISE THE ALARM.
YES. YES, OF COURSE.
WHALES, I THINK, WILL HAVE THE SPEED AND STAMINA TO CARRY US.
I DON'T KNOW THESE WATERS, AND ONCE I LURE SOME IN, IT'LL TAKE TIME TO BREAK THEM TO HARNESS.
AND WE'LL NEED REPLACEMENTS WHEN THEY TIRE. BUT IF WE PUSH HARD ENOUGH--
NO.
JUST GET ABOARD.

THEY CALL ME A FREAK BACK IN THE PALACE. FOR THE COLOR OF MY SKIN, FOR MY STRENGTH AND MORE.
BUT I'M FASTER THAN ANY WHALE, ATTUMA. AND I WON'T TIRE.
IF ANYONE CAN GET US HOME IN TIME... IT'S ME.
NAMOR, ARE YOU SURE...?
LET HIM PROVE IT, DORMA. ANYONE CAN TALK. PUFF THEMSELVES UP INTO A GREAT HERO, A LEGEND A-BORNING.
BUT THE TIME FOR TALK IS PAST. SO SHOW US, PRINCE OF ATLANTIS. IF YOU CAN'T DO IT, WELL...THE SEA WILL PROVIDE.
HIS WORDS WERE MEANT TO STING, TO SPUR ME ON. I KNEW THAT.
AND MORE, THANKS TO THE STONE'S INFECTION, I KNEW WHAT HE FELT, TOO. DOUBT, IRRITATION AND SOMETHING ELSE... SOMETHING DARKER, ANGRIER.
I COULD FEEL DORMA'S EMOTIONS AS WELL. SORROW AND GRIEF, MOSTLY-- FOR OUR COMPANIONS, FOR HER PET.
BUT THE STONE ALSO LET ME FEEL HER HOPE. HER FAITH IN ME.
AND I WOULD NOT LET HER DOWN.
WE TRAVELED FOR DAYS--
--VEERING FROM OUR COURSE ONLY WHEN ATTUMA DIRECTED ME TO A SCHOOL OF FISH HERE, A COLONY OF LOBSTERS THERE.
DORMA SLEPT. HE FOUGHT NOT TO. AND I--


--I SWAM ON.
THE FARM VILLAGE! BUT--


THE BLACK TIDE IS STILL AHEAD OF US. THEY'VE PASSED THROUGH HERE.
AND THEY'VE-- THEY'VE--


THERE ARE SURVIVORS. A FEW, AT LEAST.
BUT...THEY FEAR US.
CAN YOU BLAME THEM? WHEN WE WERE LAST HERE...
...WE TRAVELED WITH THE TIDE.

IS THERE SOMETHING WE CAN DO FOR THEM? ANYTHING?
YES. WE KEEP GOING.
WE CARRY THEIR STORY NOW TOO.

I REMEMBERED--THEY WERE CHEERING US NOT SO LONG AGO. CELEBRATING OUR RESCUING THEM FROM RAIDERS.
THEY WANTED TO SHARE THEIR MEAGER FOOD STORES WITH US. AND NOW WHAT DID THEY HAVE?
I FELT THE RESONANCES OF THE TIDE AND WHAT THEY DID HERE. AND THE HORROR AND RAGE DROVE ME ON.

I FEEL THAT RAGE, THAT HELPLESSNESS, EVEN TODAY.
IT HAS ONLY BEEN, WHAT? NINETY YEARS?
MEMORIES LIVE LONG IN THE DEPTHS.
I HAVE NOT BEEN BACK HERE SINCE THAT DAY.
THEY HAVE RECOVERED, REBUILT.
BUT THEY HAVE A SAYING IN THE REGION--"STAY CLEAR OF IMPERIAL CONCERNS. THEY COME WITH BLOOD AND TEETH."
AND AS ATTUMA SAID--WHO CAN BLAME THEM AFTER WHAT HAPPENED THEN?
AND WHY WE'RE HERE TODAY AS WELL?
WELL?

ANYTHING, BLOODTIDE?
LINK YOUR MYSTIC SENSES TO MINE, ECHIDNA. I'LL READ DEEPER, FARTHER. PERHAPS...
...NO. NOTHING RECENT.
THEY HAVE NOT COME THIS WAY, MY KING.
WE NEEDED TO CHECK, NAMOR. WE HAVE SO LITTLE TO GO ON.
ONE OF THE OTHER SCOUTING GROUPS WILL FIND THEM.
YES.
THAT'S WHAT I'M AFRAID OF.
THE KING IN BLACK WAS A GRAVE THREAT TO THE WORLD.
YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO.
DID I, ANDROMEDA? PERHAPS.
TO FACE THE THREAT POSED BY THE KING IN BLACK, I SAW NO OTHER OPTION, AT LEAST. BUT TWO THINGS ARE CERTAIN: FIRST, THAT I MADE THE CHOICE TO DO IT, AND SECOND...
...THAT OTHERS WILL PAY THE PRICE.
A PRICE PAID ALREADY BY TOO MANY. AND THOSE MEMORIES, TOO...

...DO NOT FADE.
CHASM-FOLK! YOU ARE READY FOR TRAVEL, AS I REQUESTED--IT IS GOOD. ON THE WARNINGS OF THE ATLANTEAN MAGES, WE LEAVE TODAY.
THEY HAVE ADVISED US TO SEEK SHELTER IN THE DEEP CHASMS WEST OF HERE. FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL.
SAFETY? BUT THE YEARLY HARVEST, MY CHIEFTAIN! WE HAVE JUST BEGUN IT!
BAH! WE ARE NOT CITY-FOLK LIKE THE ATLANTEANS!
WE DO NOT FLEE! WE CAN STAND AND FIGHT!
YOUR COURAGE IS NOT IN QUESTION, MY FRIENDS.
THIS IS MERELY TEMPORARY. A TROOP OF GUARDS AND THREE EXPERIENCED SORCERERS WILL REMAIN.
ONCE THE DANGER IS PAST, YOU CAN--
HM?
WHAT--?

EH?
B-BY THE ETERNAL DEEP--!
HELLO, GRANDFATHER.
HAVE YOU MISSED ME?

DID WE FEEL THAT, TOO?
I'VE OFTEN WONDERED.
I THINK-- WE FELT SOMETHING.
A RED, SCREAMING... SOMETHING.
BUT WE WERE FAR ENOUGH AWAY, EXHAUSTED ENOUGH...
C-CALL HER, RITE-MASTER! CALL HER!
...THAT WE COULD PRETEND IT WAS JUST OUR FEARS. A KIND OF IMAGINED NIGHTMARE.
BY ALL THE GODS, MAN! CALL HER NOW!
TARRRRRRRRR

YES! SHE RISES! SHE RISES!
THEIR SEA DRAGON?
FINALLY...A CHALLENGE!

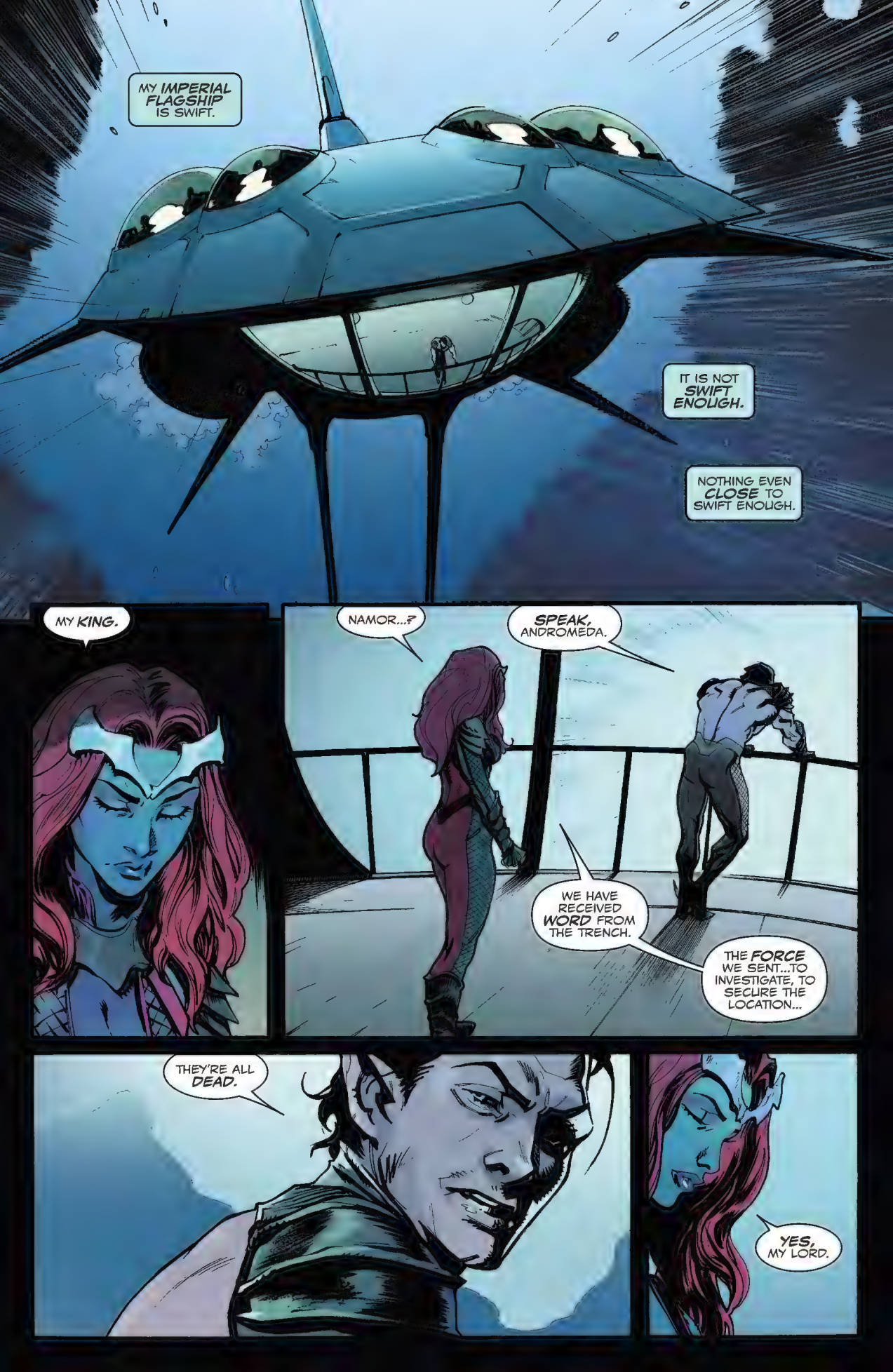
BUT NEARLY A DAY LATER, WHEN WE ARRIVED--
NO...
NO!
--WE KNEW--
A GRAND AND GLORIOUS MISSION...
TO UNITE OUR PEOPLES...
L-LOOK! THE MIST--
YES, DORMA OF ATLANTIS. THE MIST--

--IT'S FADING AWAY.
--THE NIGHTMARE WAS REAL.

MY F-FATHER-- HIS WIFE--
--MY PEOPLE--
--THE GREAT SEA DRAGON--
ATTUMA--
THIS--
THIS--
KRAAAAAAAA
THIS WAS ATLANTIS--
ATLANTIS--
SENT US ON THIS MISSION-- SENT US TO RETRIEVE THAT DAMNED STONE--
AND NOW...
...NOW ATLANTIS HAS DONE THIS.

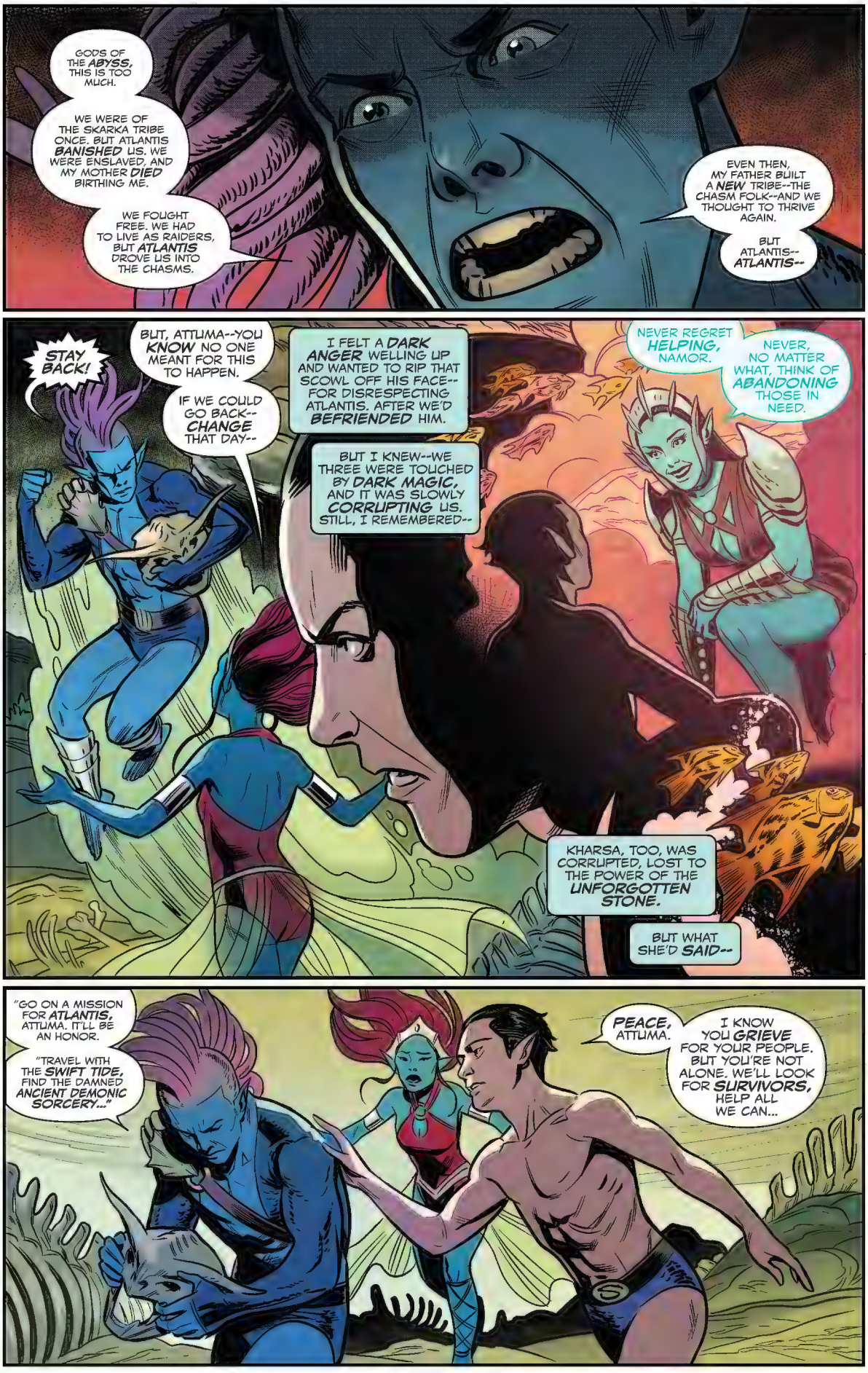
KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #4

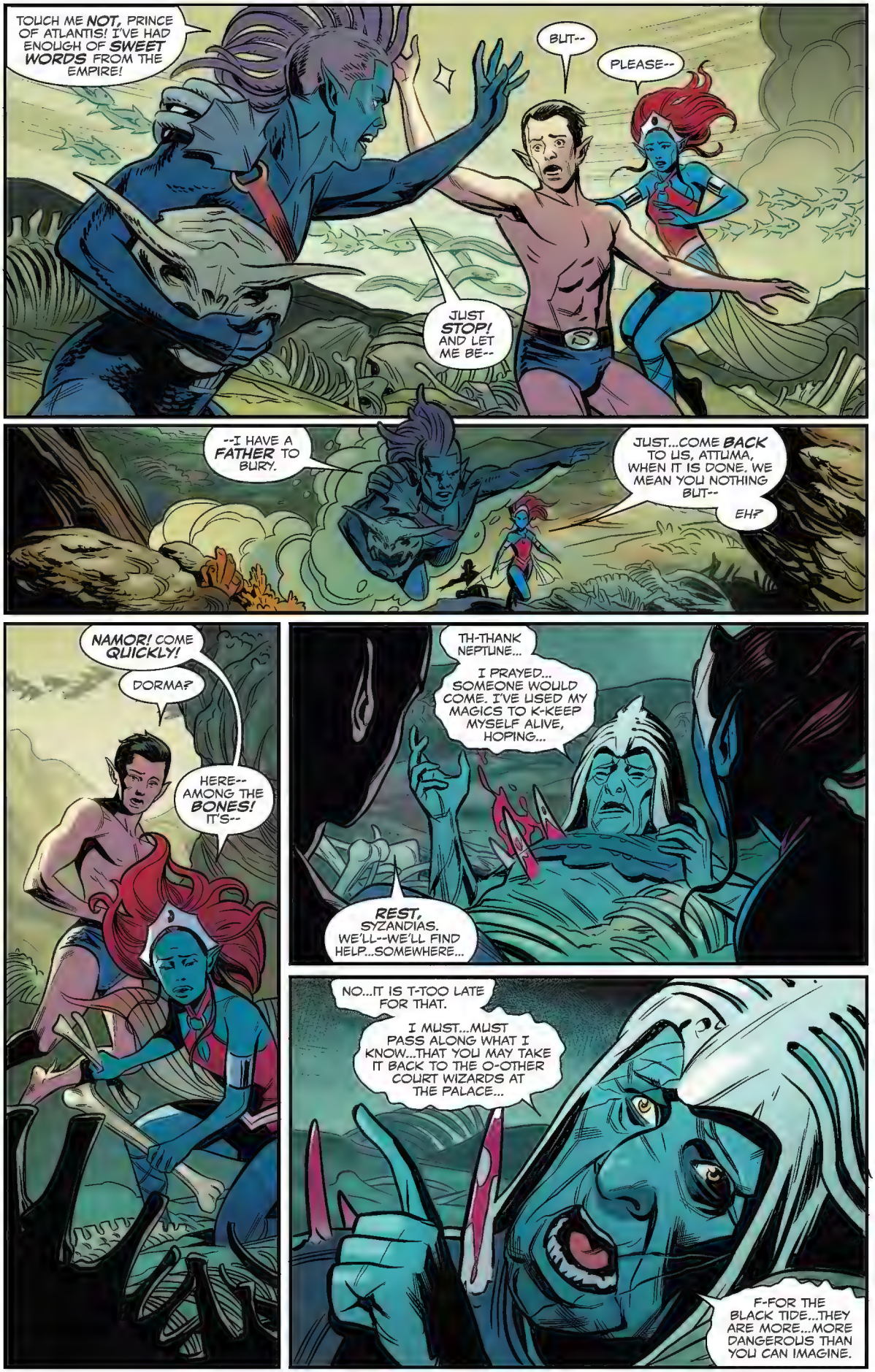
COLD CURRENTS

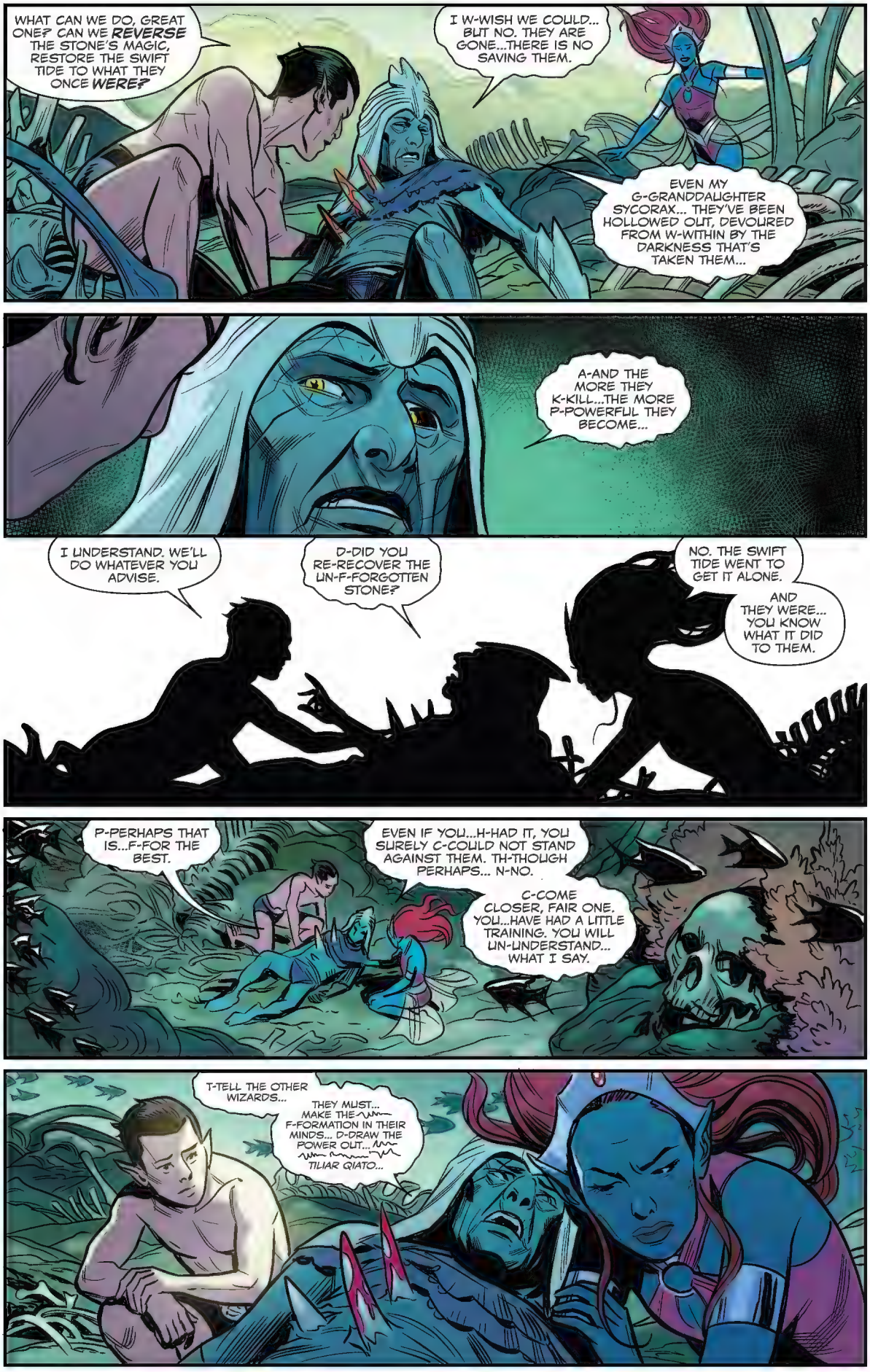

MY IMPERIAL FLAGSHIP IS SWIFT.
IT IS NOT SWIFT ENOUGH.
NOTHING EVEN CLOSE TO SWIFT ENOUGH.
MY KING.
NAMOR...?
SPEAK, ANDROMEDA.
WE HAVE RECEIVED WORD FROM THE TRENCH.
THE FORCE WE SENT...TO INVESTIGATE, TO SECURE THE LOCATION...
THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
YES, MY LORD.

YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO, SIRE. IF THEY'D STRUCK ELSEWHERE...
YES, YES.
OUR STRONGEST FORCE. OUR BEST WARRIORS.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE. SHOULD HAVE GONE THERE FIRST.
TELL THE SHIP'S COMMANDER HE CAN EASE OFF EMERGENCY SPEED. ALL DELIBERATE SPEED, BUT DON'T RISK THE ENGINES OR CREW.
SIRE?
WE DO NEED TO GET THERE AS--
YES. AND YOU WILL.
BUT I'LL BE GOING ON AHEAD.
THE OCEANS ARE VAST, AND WE COULD NOT KNOW FOR SURE WHERE THEY WOULD BE.
AND THUS WE HAVE BEEN A STEP BEHIND THEM ALL THIS TIME.
I CANNOT HELP BUT REMEMBER A TIME I'D HAVE KNOWN WHERE THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY.
A TIME, INDEED...

COLD CURRENTS
...WHEN I COULD NOT ESCAPE THAT KNOWLEDGE.
THEY'RE DEAD! THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
AND IT'S ATLANTIS'S FAULT!


GODS OF THE ABYSS, THIS IS TOO MUCH.
WE WERE OF THE SKARKA TRIBE ONCE. BUT ATLANTIS BANISHED US. WE WERE ENSLAVED, AND MY MOTHER DIED BIRTHING ME.
WE FOUGHT FREE. WE HAD TO LIVE AS RAIDERS, BUT ATLANTIS DROVE US INTO THE CHASMS.
EVEN THEN, MY FATHER BUILT A NEW TRIBE--THE CHASM FOLK--AND WE THOUGHT TO THRIVE AGAIN.
BUT ATLANTIS-- ATLANTIS--
STAY BACK!
BUT, ATTUMA--YOU KNOW NO ONE MEANT FOR THIS TO HAPPEN.
IF WE COULD GO BACK-- CHANGE THAT DAY--
I FELT A DARK ANGER WELLING UP AND WANTED TO RIP THAT SCOWL OFF HIS FACE-- FOR DISRESPECTING ATLANTIS. AFTER WE'D BEFRIENDED HIM.
BUT I KNEW--WE THREE WERE TOUCHED BY DARK MAGIC, AND IT WAS SLOWLY CORRUPTING US. STILL, I REMEMBERED--
NEVER REGRET HELPING, NAMOR.
NEVER, NO MATTER WHAT, THINK OF ABANDONING THOSE IN NEED.
KHARSA, TOO, WAS CORRUPTED, LOST TO THE POWER OF THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE.
BUT WHAT SHE'D SAID--
"GO ON A MISSION FOR ATLANTIS, ATTUMA. IT'LL BE AN HONOR.
"TRAVEL WITH THE SWIFT TIDE, FIND THE DAMNED ANCIENT DEMONIC SORCERY..."
PEACE, ATTUMA.
I KNOW YOU GRIEVE FOR YOUR PEOPLE. BUT YOU'RE NOT ALONE. WE'LL LOOK FOR SURVIVORS, HELP ALL WE CAN...


TOUCH ME NOT, PRINCE OF ATLANTIS! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF SWEET WORDS FROM THE EMPIRE!
BUT--
PLEASE--
JUST STOP! AND LET ME BE--
--I HAVE A FATHER TO BURY.
JUST...COME BACK TO US, ATTUMA, WHEN IT IS DONE. WE MEAN YOU NOTHING BUT--
EH?
NAMOR! COME QUICKLY!
DORMA?
HERE-- AMONG THE BONES! IT'S--
TH-THANK NEPTUNE...
I PRAYED... SOMEONE WOULD COME. I'VE USED MY MAGICS TO K-KEEP MYSELF ALIVE, HOPING...
REST, SYZANDIAS. WE'LL--WE'LL FIND HELP...SOMEWHERE...
NO...IT IS T-TOO LATE FOR THAT.
I MUST...MUST PASS ALONG WHAT I KNOW...THAT YOU MAY TAKE IT BACK TO THE O-OTHER COURT WIZARDS AT THE PALACE...
F-FOR THE BLACK TIDE...THEY ARE MORE...MORE DANGEROUS THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.

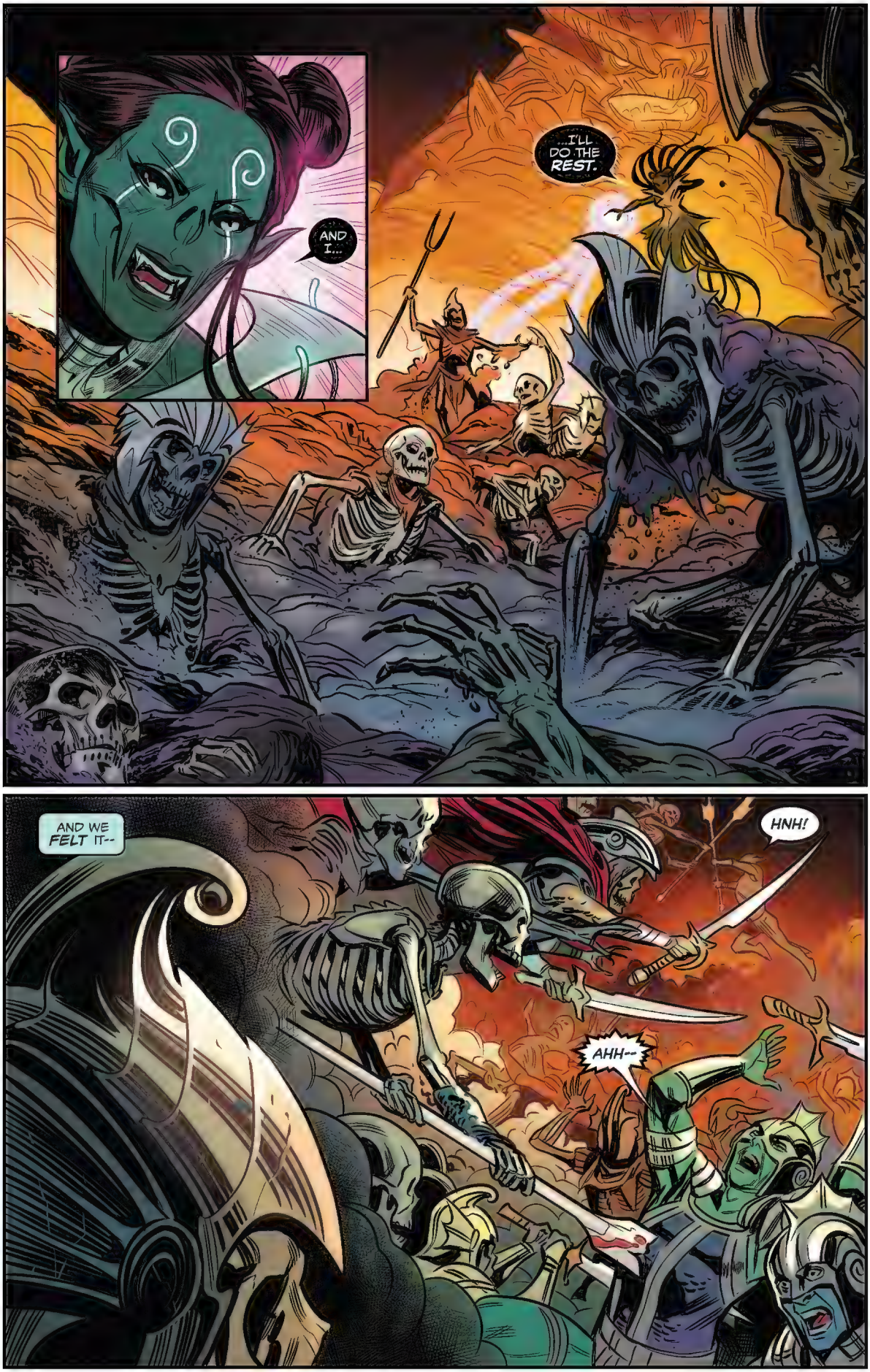

WHAT CAN WE DO, GREAT ONE? CAN WE REVERSE THE STONE'S MAGIC, RESTORE THE SWIFT TIDE TO WHAT THEY ONCE WERE?
I W-WISH WE COULD... BUT NO. THEY ARE GONE...THERE IS NO SAVING THEM.
EVEN MY G-GRANDDAUGHTER SYCORAX... THEY'VE BEEN HOLLOWED OUT, DEVOURED FROM W-WITHIN BY THE DARKNESS THAT'S TAKEN THEM...
A-AND THE MORE THEY K-KILL...THE MORE P-POWERFUL THEY BECOME...
I UNDERSTAND. WE'LL DO WHATEVER YOU ADVISE.
D-DID YOU RE-RECOVER THE UN-F-FORGOTTEN STONE?
NO. THE SWIFT TIDE WENT TO GET IT ALONE.
AND THEY WERE... YOU KNOW WHAT IT DID TO THEM.
P-PERHAPS THAT IS...F-FOR THE BEST.
EVEN IF YOU...H-HAD IT, YOU SURELY C-COULD NOT STAND AGAINST THEM. TH-THOUGH PERHAPS... N-NO.
C-COME CLOSER, FAIR ONE. YOU...HAVE HAD A LITTLE TRAINING. YOU WILL UN-UNDERSTAND... WHAT I SAY.
T-TELL THE OTHER WIZARDS...
THEY MUST... MAKE THE F-FORMATION IN THEIR MINDS... D-DRAW THE POWER OUT... TILIAR QIATO...
AH

HE'S... GONE.
WHAT DID HE SAY?
JUST...JUST THE FORMATIONS OF A SPELL, I THINK. BUT I DOUBT IT'D DO ANY GOOD-- NOT WITHOUT...
WITHOUT THE STONE, HM? MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT IT BEHIND, THEN.
WH--?
OR MAYBE WE CAN JUST SEND ANOTHER MISSION AFTER IT. THAT'S WHAT ATLANTEANS DO, ISN'T IT?
ATTUMA--
NEVER MIND. LET'S JUST LEAVE THIS PLACE--THERE'S NOTHING MORE FOR ME HERE.
I AM UNITED WITH ATLANTIS ONE LAST TIME--
--TO GET REVENGE FOR MY PEOPLE.
SO LET'S GO. LET'S CATCH UP TO THEM AND DESTROY THEM. WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, AFTER ALL.
WE DID.
WE HAD KNOWN EVER SINCE MURMANSK. WHEN THE STONE'S MAGIC HAD TOUCHED US, IT LINKED US TO THEM.
WE KNEW EXACTLY WHERE THEY WERE. AND IT CHILLED ME TO THE BONE.

THEY WERE STILL LEAGUES OUT...
...BUT THEY WERE APPROACHING ATLANTIS.
EH? WHAT IS...?
IT FEELS...
GO.
GO!

WE FELT THEIR APPROACH.
WE FELT THEM ARRIVE, IN THE FARMLANDS THAT RINGED THE CITY.
ATLANTIS, ATLANTIS. YOUR GREATEST PROTECTORS HAVE RETURNED, O GRANDEST OF EMPIRES...
...AND THE BILL FOR OUR SERVICES HAS COME DUE.
AH. LOOK.

NO FURTHER, KHARSA.
OUR SEERS TOLD US YOU WERE COMING AND BID US PREPARE A DEFENSE.
YOU WILL NOT REACH THE CITY.
WE FELT IT WHEN THEY FACED DOWN THE IMPERIAL ARMY--
HNH.
MANY BATTLES HAVE BEEN FOUGHT ON THESE PLAINS, IN THE SWEEP OF ATLANTIS'S STORIED HISTORY. MANY BRUTAL, DEADLY BATTLES.
AND MANY LIVES LOST.
DO YOU FEEL THEM, MOUNTAIN?
I DO, SYCORAX.
SHALL I BRING THEM TO YOU?
YES, THANK YOU.


AND I...
...I'LL DO THE REST.
AND WE FELT IT--
HNH!
AHH--

--WHEN THE SLAUGHTER BEGAN.

MORE, WE FELT THEIR JOY.

AT EVERY DEATH.

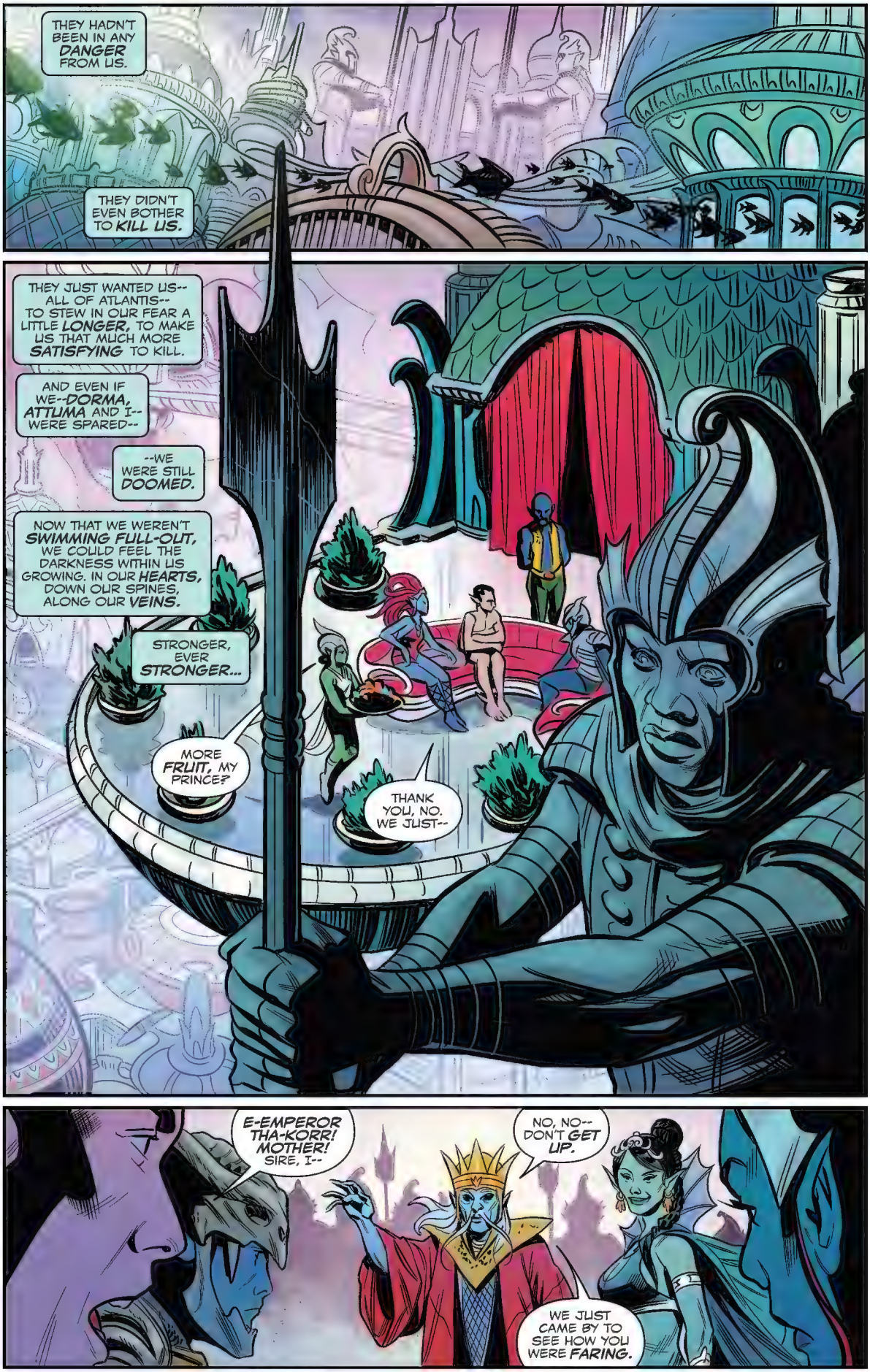
EVERY SCREAM OF AGONY.

EVERY MOMENT OF TORMENT.

UNTIL--
AHH.
KRANG, ISN'T IT? I THINK I REMEMBER YOU.
BUT YOU IMPERIAL WARLORDS ALL COME AND GO SO EASILY. PUFFED UP AND SELF-IMPORTANT, STAYING SAFE BEHIND THE PALACE WALLS.
NEVER VENTURING OUT WITHOUT THOUSANDS AT YOUR BACK.
I WONDER... HOW WILL YOUR HEART TASTE?
DO YOUR WORST, WOMAN.
I FIGHT FOR ATLANTIS. I DIE FOR ATLANTIS. AND AFTER MY DEATH...
...ATLANTIS WILL FIGHT ON!
NOT FOR LONG, IT WON'T.
I WAS GOING TO SEND YOU SCURRYING BACK WITH A MESSAGE. BUT YOU'RE TEDIOUS, SO SOMEONE ELSE WILL HAVE TO--

NO!
-HNH!-
WHO IN--?
OH, IT'S YOU.
SHOULD HAVE FELT YOU COMING--BUT I SUPPOSE WE WERE HAVING TOO MUCH FUN.
SO WHAT NOW, LITTLE PRINCES?
AH...
V-vaevis tiliar qiato...
Praesan trianta faxetio...

REALLY? A SPELL?
BRAVE, LITTLE LADY-IN-TRAINING, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
BUT YOU HAVE NO POWER OVER US. THE DARKNESS IN YOU IS GROWING, THAT'S TRUE. AND IT'LL TAKE YOU FULLY, IN TIME.
BUT IT'S STILL SO SMALL COMPARED TO US.
YOUR FEAR. NOW, THAT'S DELICIOUS.
AND YOU SHOULD HAVE BROUGHT THAT IDIOTIC FISH WITH YOU--AMBROSE, WASN'T IT? OR HAS HE MET WITH SOME CALAMITY ALONG THE WAY?
GO NOW. CARRY A MESSAGE.
TELL YOUR EMPEROR, HIS CAPITAL CITY FALLS TOMORROW.
AND ALL WITHIN IT DIE.


THEY HADN'T BEEN IN ANY DANGER FROM US.
THEY DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO KILL US.
THEY JUST WANTED US-- ALL OF ATLANTIS-- TO STEW IN OUR FEAR A LITTLE LONGER, TO MAKE US THAT MUCH MORE SATISFYING TO KILL.
AND EVEN IF WE--DORMA, ATTUMA AND I-- WERE SPARED--
--WE WERE STILL DOOMED.
NOW THAT WE WEREN'T SWIMMING FULL-OUT, WE COULD FEEL THE DARKNESS WITHIN US GROWING. IN OUR HEARTS, DOWN OUR SPINES, ALONG OUR VEINS.
STRONGER, EVER STRONGER...
MORE FRUIT, MY PRINCE?
THANK YOU, NO. WE JUST--
E-EMPEROR THA-KORR! MOTHER! SIRE, I--
NO, NO-- DON'T GET UP.
WE JUST CAME BY TO SEE HOW YOU WERE FARING.

WE'RE--WE'RE ALL RIGHT, MY LORD!
BUT THE TIDE--
SIRE.
THE CHILDREN SAVED MY LIFE TODAY, MY EMPEROR. I ALMOST WISH THEY HADN'T.
WE LOST FOUR FULL BATTALIONS IN ONLY A FEW HOURS. AND THE BLACK TIDE WERE COMPLETELY UNHARMED.
I AM GRIEVOUSLY SORRY--
--BUT I FEAR ALL MAY BE LOST.
THEY SAY THEY WILL ATTACK THE CITY TOMORROW?
YES, GREAT ONE.
THE COURT SORCERERS SEEK A DEFENSE BUT DON'T KNOW HOW TO PREPARE ONE. DON'T EVEN KNOW WHEN THE TIDE WILL ATTACK, WHERE THEY ARE...
YOU WANT TO KNOW WHERE THEY ARE?
WE CAN LEAD YOU STRAIGHT TO THEM. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS THINK ABOUT THEM, AND WE CAN FEEL--
A-AAHHH!
WHAT--?
IT WAS THE DARK MAGIC. BUT SO MUCH OF IT-- AND SO CLOSE...

BY NEPTUNE'S TRIDENT!
STAY BACK, CREATURE!
S-SUFFERING SHAD! THEY'VE SENT A--
NO! I-IT'S--

BLARRFF!
IT IS!
IT'S AMBROSE!
OH, AMBROSE-- YOU'RE ALIVE!
BUT HOW? WE THOUGHT-- WE WERE SURE HE DIED WHEN HE WENT INTO THE MYSTIC CLOUD AFTER THE--
BRAWK
--THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE?!

KING IN BLACK: BLACK PANTHER VARIANT BY
STEVE EPTING

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #1 VARIANT BY
CORY SMITH & DAVID CURIEL

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #3 VARIANT BY
PAUL RENAUD

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #2 VARIANT BY
VALERIO GIANGIORDANO & JASON KEITH

KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #5

THE BREAKING WAVE

IT WAS WAR.
ALL OF EARTH WAS FACING DEATH AT THE HANDS OF A CREATURE CALLED THE KING IN BLACK. AND THE PLANET'S HEROES WERE NOT ENOUGH TO SAVE IT.
WE HAD TO CALL ON ANYONE WHO COULD HELP TURN THE TIDE. EVEN MONSTERS.
WE HAD NO CHOICE.
AND STILL, I DARED ONLY LET TWO OF THEM OUT. THOUGH IT WAS THE TWO WORST.
BUT I KNEW...
YOU'VE GROWN, NAMOR. AND KING OF ATLANTIS NOW TOO? I HAVE TO SAY, IT SUITS YOU.
BUT TELL ME, O KING...
...HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT COMES NEXT?

ALL THESE STRANGE HEROES AND VILLAINS, THEY MAY DIE.
I. MAY DIE.
YOU MAY DIE.
BUT IF WE DON'T?
I KNOW, I KNOW. NO CHOICE. DESPERATE MEASURES.
BUT WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENS NEXT? YOU MUST HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT IT.
I'VE HAD A LONG TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT.
A VERY, VERY LONG TIME.
AND I KNEW THE THREAT KHARSA WAS MAKING.
SHE COULD NOT--COULD NOT-- BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN FREE.
BUT NOW--
I RACE FOR THE TRENCH. AND I THINK ABOUT WHAT MAY COME.
WHAT ALMOST DID COME THE LAST TIME SHE WAS FREE...

ATLANTIS. IN ANOTHER TIME.
WHEN SO MANY DEAR TO ME-- MY GRANDFATHER, MY MOTHER, EVEN MY BELOVED DORMA-- WERE STILL ALIVE.
STILL ALIVE, YES...
...AND YET ANYTHING BUT SAFE.
THE DARKNESS APPROACHED, SEEMINGLY UNSTOPPABLE.
ALL THAT COULD FLED BEFORE IT.
THE BREAKING WAVE
BUT IN THE CITY, WE DID NOT RUN. WE WATCHED AND PRAYED.
BECAUSE WE KNEW WHAT WE WERE SEEING...

...COULD BE THE END OF ATLANTIS ITSELF.

HA HA HA HA HA!

COME ON, THEN, ATLANTEANS! SEND YOUR BEST! YOUR BRAVEST! COME FORWARD BY THE SCORES, BY THE HUNDREDS--

--AND DIE!

DRINK IT IN, MY CAPTAIN. LET THEIR DEATH AND PAIN FEED YOU, EMPOWER YOU. BUT WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS OF DUTY...

...THAT YOU HAD THIS IN YOU?

WE ALL HAD IT IN US, SYCORAX. ALL OF US.

AND NOW IT'S RELEASED...

...AND IT FEELS AMAZING!

YAR. WANT MORE.
MORE!
FRA
A CITY MORE.
AND ALL OURS--OURS FOR THE KILLING!
KRAKKA
KHAM
WE WEREN'T CLOSE ENOUGH TO SEE IT. BUT WE COULD FEEL IT.
WE HAVE TO GO! WE HAVE TO JOIN THE FIGHT!
WE CAN'T JUST LET OUR PEOPLE DIE!
THANKS TO THE POWER WE SHARED WITH THE BLACK TIDE...WE COULD FEEL EVERY MOMENT OF IT.
NO, YOUNG NAMOR. I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.
BUT YOU MUST STAY.

ALL THAT WOULD HAPPEN IS THAT YOU TOO WOULD DIE. AND I WILL NOT LOSE MY GRANDSON AND HEIR THAT WAY.
I WOULD WISH...WE NEEDN'T LOSE ANYONE THIS WAY.
BUT I AM EMPEROR AND MUST FACE THE TRUTH.
OUR ARMIES... ALL OF THEM, IF NECESSARY...ARE MERELY FIGHTING A HOLDING ACTION. THEY BUY US TIME, NOTHING MORE.
OUR ONLY HOPE AGAINST THE BLACK TIDE...
...IS THE UNFORGOTTEN STONE. ITS POWER CREATED THEM. AND ONLY ITS POWER CAN DESTROY THEM.
BAH!
THE POWER WITHIN... I CAN FREE IT. OR CONTAIN IT. BUT TRY AS I MIGHT...
...I CANNOT COMMAND IT!
TCH-A!
IT IS NO USE, MY LIEGE. WE CANNOT WIELD THE STONE. CANNOT EVEN TOUCH IT WITHOUT BEING CORRUPTED. WITHOUT OUR SHIELDS AROUND IT...
...IT WOULD BE AFFECTING US EVEN NOW.
WE NEED THE SCROLLS OF THE ANCIENTS. AND EVEN THEN, IT WOULD TAKE MONTHS. OR YEARS.
THEN WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO? ABANDON ATLANTIS? LET OUR PEOPLE DIE WHILE WE GO INTO HIDING?
NO, NO...
:-)PFAH!:-
KELP-LIVERED FOOLS.

THE STONE CAN BE TOUCHED. AND IF IT CAN BE TOUCHED...
...THERE MUST BE A WAY TO WIELD IT.
I HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY ITS POWER. NAMOR HAS. DORMA HAS. AND WE HAVE NOT BEEN CORRUPTED.
OH, YOU SAY SO?
THE TAINT OF IT IS ALL THROUGH YOU, BOY. ANY FOOL CAN SEE THAT.
YES. EVEN NOW, IT GROWS, EATING AWAY AT YOUR MINDS, YOUR SOULS.
EVEN IF WE SAVE THE EMPIRE, IT WILL TAKE GREAT MAGICS TO SAVE YOU THREE.
IF YOU CAN BE SAVED AT ALL.
AFTER ALL, LOOK AT WHAT IT HAS DONE TO THIS MONSTROSITY!
DON'T YOU SAY THAT! DON'T YOU SAY THAT!
AMBROSE SAVED US ALL! WE WOULD NOT EVEN HAVE THE STONE IF NOT FOR HIM! HOW DARE YOU INSULT HIM LIKE THAT?!
DORMA! REMEMBER WHO YOU SPEAK TO! WE MUST LISTEN TO THE COURT WIZARDS-- THEY KNOW BEST ABOUT THESE--
NO!
EH?
WHAT?
THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING--

DORMA!
WAIT!
--BUT I WILL!
WE REACHED THE BATTLEGROUND-- TOO SWIFTLY.
THEY HAD COME UNCOMFORTABLY CLOSE TO THE CITY WALLS. AND THEY WERE STILL FORCING THEIR WAY FORWARD.
DORMA...
...THAT SPELL SYZANDIAS TAUGHT YOU. DO YOU THINK...?
THE PROBLEM WHEN I TRIED IT BEFORE WAS POWER. BUT I HAVE THE STONE NOW, SO...
Vaevis tiliar qiato...
...praesan trianta faxetio!

ahhh!
ahhhh!

OHHHH, LADY OF ATLANTIS...
LADY FAIR, LADY FRAGILE. YOU'VE...GROWN TEETH.

BUT WE, MY DEAR...WE HAVE LOTS OF TEETH...

...AND SO MUCH MORE PRACTICE USING THEM!

NO!
YOU WON'T--
GOMPP!
ENOUGH, MINNOW.
YOU'RE NO LONGER AMUSING.
vaevis tiliar qiato...
NICE HAT. CAN I HAVE IT ONCE YOU'RE DEAD?
...praesan trianta faxetio!
T-AH!
HFF!
...trianta faxetio!
HNN...
...faxetio!
IT'S...IT'S NO GOOD! IT'S HURTING THEM, BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH! HOW...?

FALL BACK, YOUNGSTERS! DON'T LET THEM REACH HER!
KRANG!
SEE TO DORMA! WE'LL HOLD BACK THESE FOUL BEASTS--
--AS LONG AS IT TAKES!
AND THE ARMY BATTLED BRAVELY--
BREAK THEM APART, MEN! ISOLATE THEM-- DON'T LET THEM PROTECT EACH OTHER!
--BUT WE ALL KNEW THEY'D FALL, IN TIME.
IN FAR TOO LITTLE TIME--
--UNLESS WE CAME UP WITH SOMETHING MORE--
THIS IS KILLING YOU, DORMA. WE SHOULD RETURN THE STONE TO THE PALACE, BEFORE IT--
I DON'T THINK I DARE. IT HAS ME NOW, AND IF I RELEASE IT, I THINK I'LL BE LOST TO IT.
I JUST... THE DARK MAGIC WITHIN ME ISN'T ENOUGH. I CAN USE THE STONE, BUT NOT MASTER IT.
YOU NEED MORE POWER? IT'S WITHIN US TOO! TAKE IT FROM US!
TAKE ALL OF IT!

OH! AMBROSE!
BARRRPP
HE CARRIED THAT THING WITHIN HIM FOR DAYS! HE'S GOT MORE OF IT THAN ANY OF US!
USE IT! DESTROY THEM!
I... NOW IT'S TOO...TOO MUCH!
C-CAN'T... CONTROL IT...!
DORMA!
SYCORAX-- BEFORE, SHE SAID YOU DON'T CONTROL MAGIC WITH POWER! YOU SHAPE IT-- LET IT FLOW!
OH!
...OH!!!
I...I KNOW WHAT SHE MEANT NOW!
THE POWER... IT WANTS TO BE USED! IT NEEDS TO BE USED! BUT IF... IF I JUST... GUIDE IT...
Vaevis tiliar qiato... Praesan trianta...

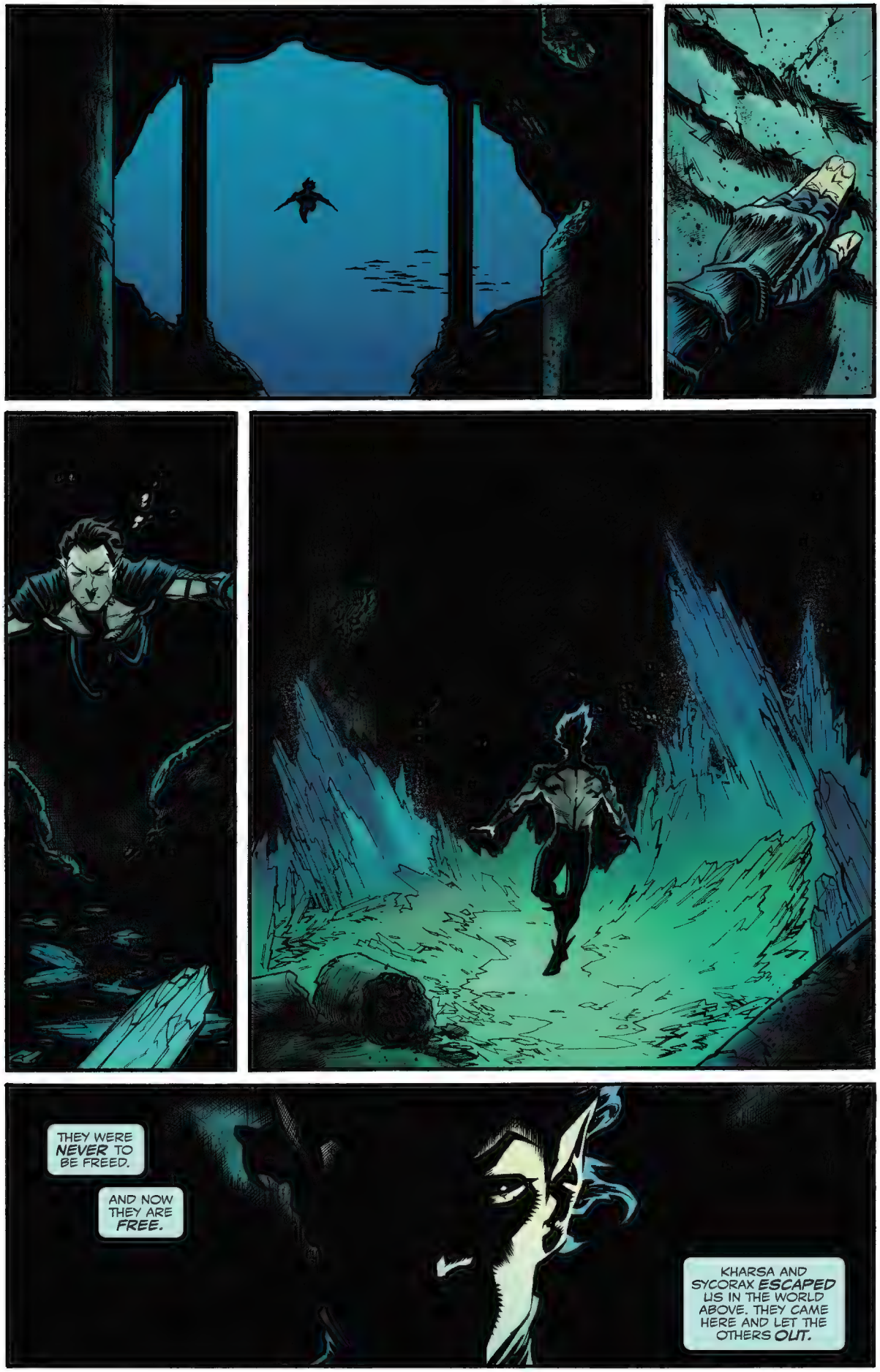
NO!
STOP HER! STOP HER BEFORE SHE--
...faxetio!
FAWM

I...I THINK I DID IT!
B-BUT I FEEL S-SO--
THREE DAYS LATER...

...HM?
WHERE...?
YOU ARE IN ATLANTIS, CHILD. AN ATLANTIS THAT STILL LIVES.
AND FOR THAT, WE OWE YOU A GREAT DEBT.
BUT... I WAS...
YOU'RE FINE, DEAR.
AND THE WIZARDS SAY YOU'LL STAY THAT WAY. IT WAS AMBROSE-- HE ABSORBED THE DARK MAGIC IN YOU AND THE BOYS.
SWALLOWED IT ALL UP HIMSELF.
IS HE...?
HE APPEARS TO BE IN RATHER PREPOSTEROUS GOOD HEALTH, MY LADY. THE MAGIC-- IT TRANSFORMED HIS BODY BUT NOT HIS SPIRIT.
THERE SEEMS TO BE NO EVIL IN HIM, NO DARKNESS.
THERE'S NOTHING FOR THE STONE'S POWER TO CORRUPT.
HA! YOU'RE THE BEST, AMBROSE.
AND WHAT OF...?
ATTUMA'S GONE. I WISH WE COULD SAY WE PARTED FRIENDS, BUT...
HE SAID HE DID HIS PART, BUT HE'LL HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ATLANTIS AGAIN. NOT AS AN ALLY, AT LEAST.
I'M... SORRY TO HEAR THAT.
ONE MORE QUESTION, THEN. WHAT WILL BECOME OF THEM--THE BLACK TIDE?

HARRAN'S RIFT. THE DEEPEST TRENCH IN ALL THE OCEANS.
AND ALL THE WAY DOWN, AND DEEPER STILL...
...THAT'S WHERE WE BUILT THEIR PRISON.
BUILT IT DEEP AND STRONG.
AND IT WAS THERE AS WELL...
...THAT MY GRANDFATHER READ THEM THE RITES OF BANISHMENT.
TO THE DEPTHS WE CONDEMN YOU. TO THE DEPTHS, THE COLD, THE DARKNESS. FOR ALL TIME.
YOU ARE HEREBY CAST FROM US. STRIPPED OF YOUR NAMES. STRIPPED FROM OUR MEMORIES. STRIPPED FROM OUR HEARTS. FOREVER.
WE WILL RETURN, LITTLE PRINCE.
WE WILL RETURN TO KILL. WE WILL NEVER STOP.
DO YOU HEAR ME, LITTLE PRINCE?
I HEARD HER, THOUGH NOT WITH MY EARS. AND HER MOUTH NEVER MOVED.
PART OF HER POWER? A LINGERING EFFECT OF THE STONE'S TOUCH? I DO NOT KNOW.
I JUST KNEW THAT, THOUGH WE HAD NO WAY TO KILL THEM, THEY WOULD NEVER BE FREED.
NEVER.

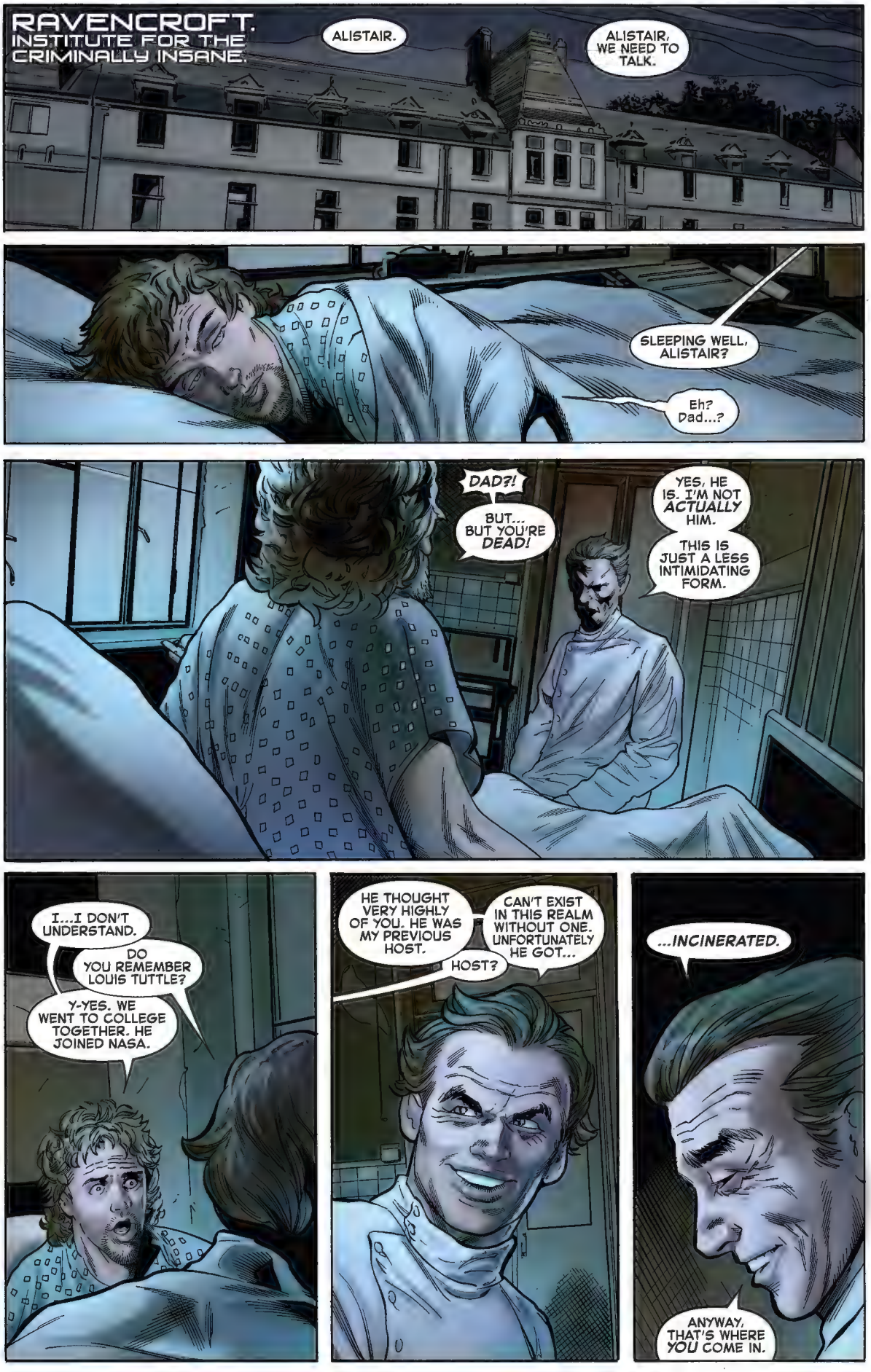
AND NOW--
I FIND THE CORPSES OF THOSE WE SET TO GUARD THIS DARK PLACE.
I FIND THE SOLDIERS WE SENT TO REINFORCE THE GUARD.
I AM...GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SACRIFICE, ALL OF YOU. AND SORRY FOR YOUR DEATHS.
YOU WILL BE BURIED WITH HONOR. YOUR FAMILIES WILL NEVER KNOW WANT.
YOU WILL BE REMEMBERED.

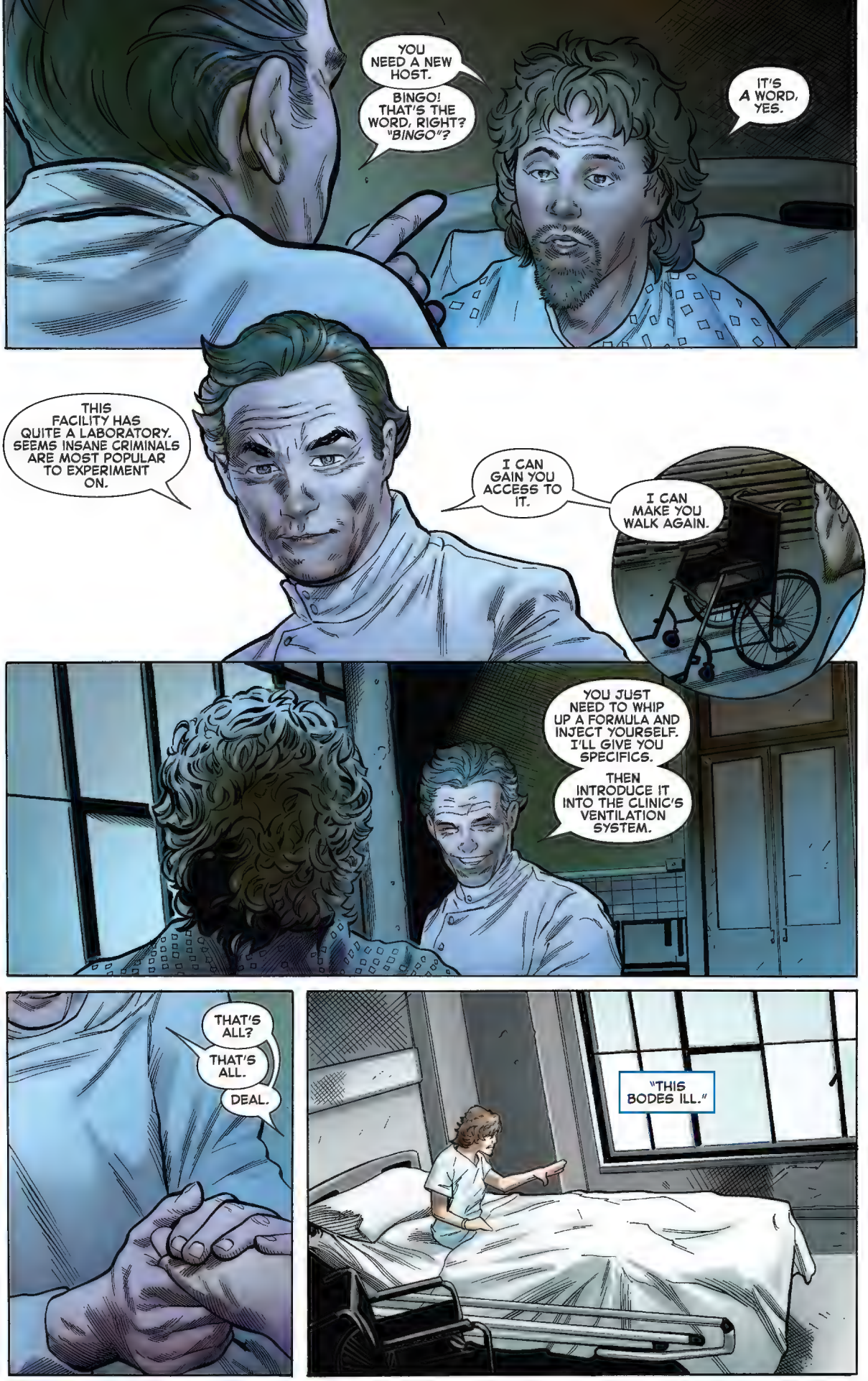

THEY WERE NEVER TO BE FREED.
AND NOW THEY ARE FREE.
KHARSA AND SYCORAX ESCAPED US IN THE WORLD ABOVE. THEY CAME HERE AND LET THE OTHERS OUT.

THEY WILL HIDE THEMSELVES FOR A TIME. IF WE ARE LUCKY.
LEARN OF THE MODERN WORLD. MAKE THEIR PLANS.
BUT THEY'LL RETURN.
THEY'LL STRIKE.
AND WHEN THEY DO, I WILL FACE THEM.
AND WHEN THAT DAY COMES, NAMOR OF ATLANTIS, I WILL BE WITH YOU.
HM?
I WILL SWIM BY YOUR SIDE, MY LOVE. AS I DID SO LONG AGO.
...
...DORMA?
AND ATTUMA WILL BE WITH US AS WELL.
I SHUDDER AGAIN AT THE THOUGHT OF WHAT'S COMING.
BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I FREED KHARSA...
...I FEEL A FAINT, WARM GLIMMERING OF HOPE.

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1

THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT PART ONE


RAVENCROFT.
INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE.
ALISTAIR.
ALISTAIR, WE NEED TO TALK.
SLEEPING WELL, ALISTAIR?
Eh? Dad...?
DAD?!
BUT... BUT YOU'RE DEAD!
YES, HE IS. I'M NOT ACTUALLY HIM.
THIS IS JUST A LESS INTIMIDATING FORM.
I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
DO YOU REMEMBER LOUIS TUTTLE?
Y-YES. WE WENT TO COLLEGE TOGETHER. HE JOINED NASA.
HE THOUGHT VERY HIGHLY OF YOU. HE WAS MY PREVIOUS HOST.
HOST?
CAN'T EXIST IN THIS REALM WITHOUT ONE. UNFORTUNATELY HE GOT...
...INCINERATED.
ANYWAY, THAT'S WHERE YOU COME IN.


YOU NEED A NEW HOST.
BINGO! THAT'S THE WORD, RIGHT? "BINGO"?
IT'S A WORD, YES.
THIS FACILITY HAS QUITE A LABORATORY. SEEMS INSANE CRIMINALS ARE MOST POPULAR TO EXPERIMENT ON.
I CAN GAIN YOU ACCESS TO IT.
I CAN MAKE YOU WALK AGAIN.
YOU JUST NEED TO WHIP UP A FORMULA AND INJECT YOURSELF. I'LL GIVE YOU SPECIFICS.
THEN INTRODUCE IT INTO THE CLINIC'S VENTILATION SYSTEM.
THAT'S ALL?
THAT'S ALL.
DEAL.
"THIS BODES ILL."

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I DESPISE MY ABILITY TO SEE EVERYTHING.
ESPECIALLY WHEN THERE IS NOTHING THAT I CAN DO ABOUT IT.
THAT IS BEYOND THE PARAMETERS OF MY KIND. WE DO NOT ACT. WE CAN ONLY OBSERVE.
WE ONCE HAD A NAME AS A RACE, BUT IT IS LONG FORGOTTEN.
HUMANS THOUGHT US TO BE FALLEN ANGELS, BACK WHEN THEY GLIMPSED ONE OF OUR KIND UPON THEIR WORLD THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. THEY CALLED US "GRIGORI."
WE HAVE SINCE NAMED OURSELVES AFTER OUR FUNCTION.
WE CALL OURSELVES "WATCHERS."

THERE IS SO MUCH GOING ON DOWN ON EARTH. SO MANY PEOPLE. SO MUCH FUSS.
THEY OBSESS ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT IS IRRELEVANT AND IGNORE THAT WHICH IS VITAL.
I SEE IT ALL. THERE IS NOTHING THAT ESCAPES MY VISION.
IT IS MOST ODD, THEN...
THAT I DID NOT SEE THIS COMING.
I AM UNABLE TO MOVE. TIME HAS STOPPED AROUND ME.
THIS SHOULD PROVE...
...INTERESTING.

NEW YORK CITY.
David's ICE CREAM
ORSON!
NO!
MY BALLOON!

HUH?
THIS'LL MAKE ME A LITTLE LATE TO THE *BUGLE*, BUT JONAH WILL HAVE TO LIVE WITH IT.
CAN'T LET A KID'S EXCITEMENT OVER A BALLOON END HIS LIFE.
IT'D BE A LOUSY WAY TO START THE DAY.
WHEEEEE!
AGAIN!
NO, NO "*AGAIN.*" STICK WITH YOUR MOTHER FROM NOW ON, OKAY?
'KAY.
YOU NEVER RUN FROM MOMMY! EVER!
'KAY.
WHO SAVED YOU?!
DAREDEVIL!
HEH. YEEEAAH, THAT FIGURES. DO SOMETHING NICE, AND SOMEBODY ELSE GETS THE CREDIT.
AT LEAST THE WORLD'S BACK TO NORMAL. AND YEAH, FELICIA MIGHT BE ANNOYED WITH ME, BUT SHE'LL GET OVER IT.
BESIDES, I DON'T DO THIS FOR THE CREDIT.
AT LEAST THAT'S WHAT I KEEP TELLING MYSELF.

PARKER!
GOOD TIMING FOR ONCE.
GO WITH NED.
DAILY BUGLE
NED LEEDS?
NO, NED BEATTY. FIND OUT WHAT SHOOTING "DUELING BANJOS" WAS LIKE.
YES, NED LEEDS! OBVIOUSLY!
HEY, NED. WHERE'RE WE GOING?
RAVENCROFT INSTITUTE...
IS IT MEAT LOAF DAY?
ALISTAIR SMYTHE WANTS TO TALK. ACTUALLY HE WANTED TO SEE JONAH, BUT I'M GOING INSTEAD.
THE SPIDER-SLAYER GUY?
THE VERY SAME.
ANY PARTICULAR REASON?
CLAIMS HE'S DEVELOPING CYBERNETIC IMPLANTS THAT HE SAYS CAN HELP PEOPLE WHO ARE PARALYZED.
SO HE'S A SUPER VILLAIN TRYING TO FIX HIS PUBLIC IMAGE.
SEEMS SO.
GOOD, BECAUSE THAT ALWAYS ENDS WELL.
ACTUALLY, WHO KNOWS? MAYBE IT WILL.
PERHAPS HE REALLY DOES WANT TO REFORM.
YOU NEVER KNOW WITH BAD GUYS. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND WATCH.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
I AM KNOWN AS THE WATCHER.
YOU'RE A WATCHER. YOU HAVE AN INDIVIDUAL MONIKER?
UATU.
AND I AM--
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE...
YOU ARE *KANG THE CONQUEROR.* OCCASIONAL ENEMY OF THE AVENGERS. TIME-TRAVELING DESPOT.
IF I LEFT OUT ANYTHING, I DO APOLOGIZE.
YOU WATCHERS, SO FAULTLESSLY POLITE.
DO YOU KNOW WHY I'VE CAPTURED YOU?
I OFFER NO OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES, SO NO, NOT REALLY.
"*OFFER*," NO. BUT YOU HAVE THEM IN ABUNDANCE NEVERTHELESS.

YOU HAVE BEEN OBSERVING HUMANITY FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, YES?
GIVE OR TAKE.
GOOD. YOU POSSESS KNOWLEDGE IT WOULD REQUIRE LIFETIMES FOR ME TO LEARN.
THEN YOU REALLY SHOULD NOT BE WASTING TIME HERE.
IT IS HARDLY A WASTE.
I AM GOING TO EXTRACT YOUR KNOWLEDGE, UATU. FEED IT INTO MY COMPUTER.
THEN I CAN SURVEY IT AT MY LEISURE.
WHAT POSSIBLE REASON WOULD YOU HAVE TO DO THAT?
BECAUSE, UATU, THIS TIME-TRAVELING DESPOT...
...IS ENDEAVORING TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE.
KLIK

FOOL. BLIND FOOL.
ALL HE IS DOING IS PROVIDING ME INROADS TO HIS SHIP'S A.I.
HE IS UNAWARE OF MY PSIONIC POWER. INSTEAD OF DRAWING ALL MY KNOWLEDGE...
...I AM ABSORBING ALL OF HIS.
I SEE THINGS THAT HAPPENED EONS BEFORE I EXISTED. AN EPIC BATTLE BETWEEN DARKNESS AND LIGHT...
...BEINGS I HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.
AND NOW... I...SOMEHOW... I AM SEEING THE FUTURE...SEEING WHAT KANG SAW... AND IT...
...THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE...
...IT...
...SEES ME...

WHAT THE BLAZES?!
EMERGENCY OVERRIDE! ACTIVATE VOCAL COMMAND!
DISCONNECT! DISCONNECT!
VOCAL COMMAND OFF-LINE. RESETTING IN TWO MINUTES.
OH, FOR--!
OMEGA EMERGENCY OVERRIDE! RELEASE THE WATCHER!
GET HIM OFF THE SHIP! NOW! NOW!
YOU HAVE INSTITUTED THE OMEGA EMERGENCY OVERRIDE. WELCOME. PLEASE FOLLOW PRELIMINARY INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR--
COME ON!!!
OF COURSE.
TRY TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE AND THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS.

FABULOUS.

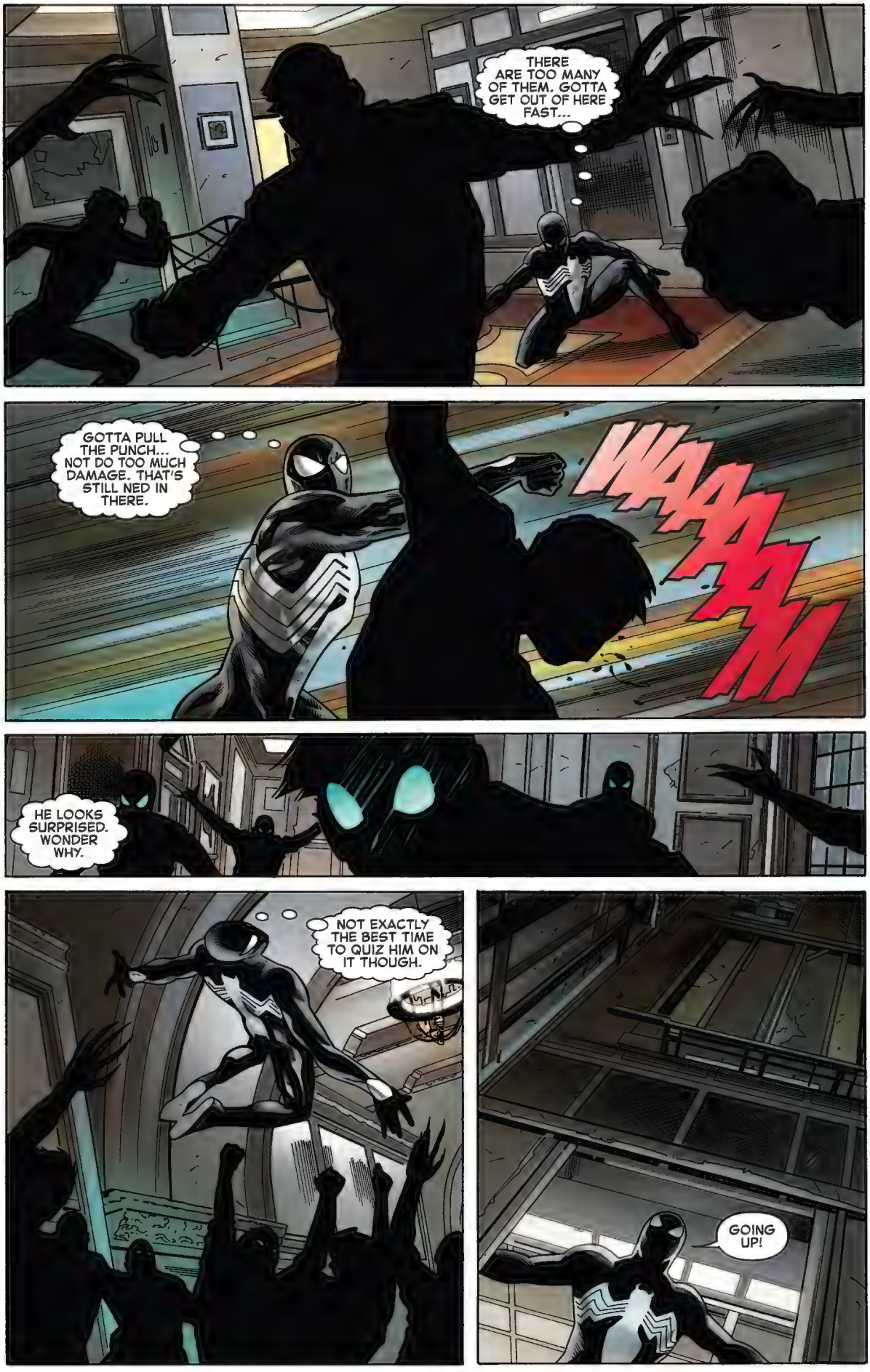
ALISTAIR? YOUR VISITORS ARE ON THE WAY UP.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
EXPERIMENTING, MONICA. SO UNLESS YOU'RE VOLUNTEERING TO BE A SUBJECT...
WHAT IS THAT YOU'RE INJECTING?! HAS IT BEEN APPROVED?
SOMETHING OF MY OWN CREATION.
AT THE MOMENT, I HAVE A TANK OF IT PUMPING INTO THE VENTILATION SYSTEM.
IT SHOULD BE THROUGHOUT THE ASYLUM BY NOW.
WH-WHAT?! YOU'RE...YOU'RE INSANE!
IN MY DEFENSE, THIS IS AN INSANE ASYLUM.
KAFF KAFF
AAAAAND WE'RE OFF AND RUNNING.

AH. PERFECT. IT'S STARTING.
UH-OH. SOMETHING'S WRONG. SPIDER-SENSE IS GOING NUTS.
COULD BE A GENERALIZED THING BECAUSE THEY HAVE CRIMINALS IN HERE, BUT...
WHAT THE--!!!
AN ECLIPSE? A SOLAR ECLIPSE?
THERE'S NO ECLIPSE TODAY! THEY'RE NOT LIKE TORNADOES THAT JUST HAPPEN! WHY--?

GLORIOUS, ISN'T IT? IT'S A DISPLAY OF THE SHADOW REALM.
AS MATTERS PROGRESS IN THE FUTURE, IT RIPPLES BACK TO THE PAST. HISTORY REWRITES ITSELF.
OR DID YOU JUST THINK CREATION RAN ONLY ONE WAY?
AH. I SEE YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY IN SHAPE TO REPLY.
TRUST ME. YOU LOOK FAR BETTER THIS WAY.
THIS IS SO MUCH MORE CONVENIENT THAN INJECTIONS.
BREATHE IT IN AND YOU BECOME ONE OF MY SLAVES. JUST LIKE MY HOST, ALISTAIR.
MY LORD WILL NOT BE SORRY HE GAVE ME THIS SECOND CHANCE.
A SHAME JONAH DECLINED TO COME. BUT...

"...HIS REPORTER WILL HAVE TO DO."
NED! THERE'S SOMETHING INSANE GOING ON--
OHHH, THIS IS NOT GOOD.
NED... JUST STAY BACK...
STAY BACK!!!
NED'S NOT IN CONTROL. GONNA NEED TO CHANGE MY COSTUME AND DEFUSE--

SL
ASH


THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM. GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE FAST...
GOTTA PULL THE PUNCH... NOT DO TOO MUCH DAMAGE. THAT'S STILL NED IN THERE.
WAAAAM
HE LOOKS SURPRISED. WONDER WHY.
NOT EXACTLY THE BEST TIME TO QUIZ HIM ON IT THOUGH.
GOING UP!

THE CLOSER I GET TO THE SOURCE OF THE DANGER, THE MORE MY SPIDER-SENSE GOES NUTS.
USUALLY IT TELLS ME WHAT TO KEEP AWAY FROM, BUT THIS TIME I CAN USE IT AS A GUIDE.
AW GREAT. HERE COMES *MUMMENSCHANZ* AGAIN...
AND, *OH* PERFECT, HERE COMES THE CAR.
MOVE, PETER. MOVE, MOVE...
MOVE!!!
EXCELLENT. THE SOURCE IS JUST AHEAD.

SMYTHE--! I KNEW IT!
NO. NOT SMYTHE. I AM--
MISTER E!

OY.
"MISTER E."
NOT MYSTERY MAN. NOT MAJOR MYSTERY. MISTER. E.
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO START.
YOU!
THAT'S RIGHT, ME. SO JUST--
BROTHER!!!
WA
M

WHY IN THE WORLD DID YOU DO THAT, BROTHER?!
WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE! WE BOTH SERVE OUR GOD!

YEAH, I'M PRETTY SURE YOU DIDN'T COME UP IN ANY SERMONS, SORRY.

YOU'RE STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT.
I'M STRONGER THAN ANYBODY THINKS.

LISTEN TO ME, BROTHER...
WE'RE NOT BROTHERS! I DON'T HAVE A BROTHER!
AND IF I DID, HE WOULDN'T BE A LAMONT CRANSTON WANNABE!
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT REFERENCE.
SORRY, BROTHER. YOU DON'T CATCH ME OFF GUARD TWICE.
UH-OH.
WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?
WELL, IT'S KINDA EXPECTED, WHAT WITH YOU BEING THE BAD GUY.
ME? THE "BAD GUY"?
WE ARE KIN! WE REPRESENT THE NATURAL ORDER!
WHAM

OUR PEOPLE WERE THERE AT THE BEGINNING!
WE SHALL CONTINUE TO EXIST AT THE END.
HUMANITY IS NOTHING BUT A COSMIC BLIP IN THE UNIVERSE.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT!
WHAAAM
Unnhhh...
CEASE THIS GAME, MY BROTHER.
STOP PRETENDING YOU ARE SOMETHING THAT YOU'RE NOT.
CONCENTRATE. C'MON, PARKER...
FOCUS ON HITTING HIM. FOCUS ON--
WAIT. NO. WHEN I HIT SHADOW NED, HE LOOKED SURPRISED. HE WASN'T EXPECTING IT.
HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT I'D GO THROUGH HIM, JUST LIKE I DID WITH MISTER E.
AND I WASN'T THINKING ABOUT IT. I JUST DID IT.

CLEAR YOUR MIND. RELAX. LET YOUR SPIDER-SENSE GUIDE YOU.
DO YOU SURRENDER? THAT IS VERY WISE, MY BROTH--
KRUNCH

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID THAT, BUT THIS GAME ENDS NOW!
YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT.
EH?
ARRRHHH!!!

WAS JUST FLYING BY-- THOUGHT I COULD BE OF SOME HELP.
THE BLACK KNIGHT?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
SAVING THE DAY. IT'S WHAT WE DO.

FIRST THINGS FIRST.
THE ECLIPSE... ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE?
CREATION MOVES FORWARD. UNCREATION RUNS BACKWARD.
WORK IT OUT.
DAMNATION!
NOW WHAT?
I AM NOT SURE.
HOPEFULLY THE ANSWER IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE.

EH?
HI.

WELCOME ABOARD THE RAKK 'N' RUIN II.
I'M THE CAPTAIN AND CREW. NAME'S ROCKET.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

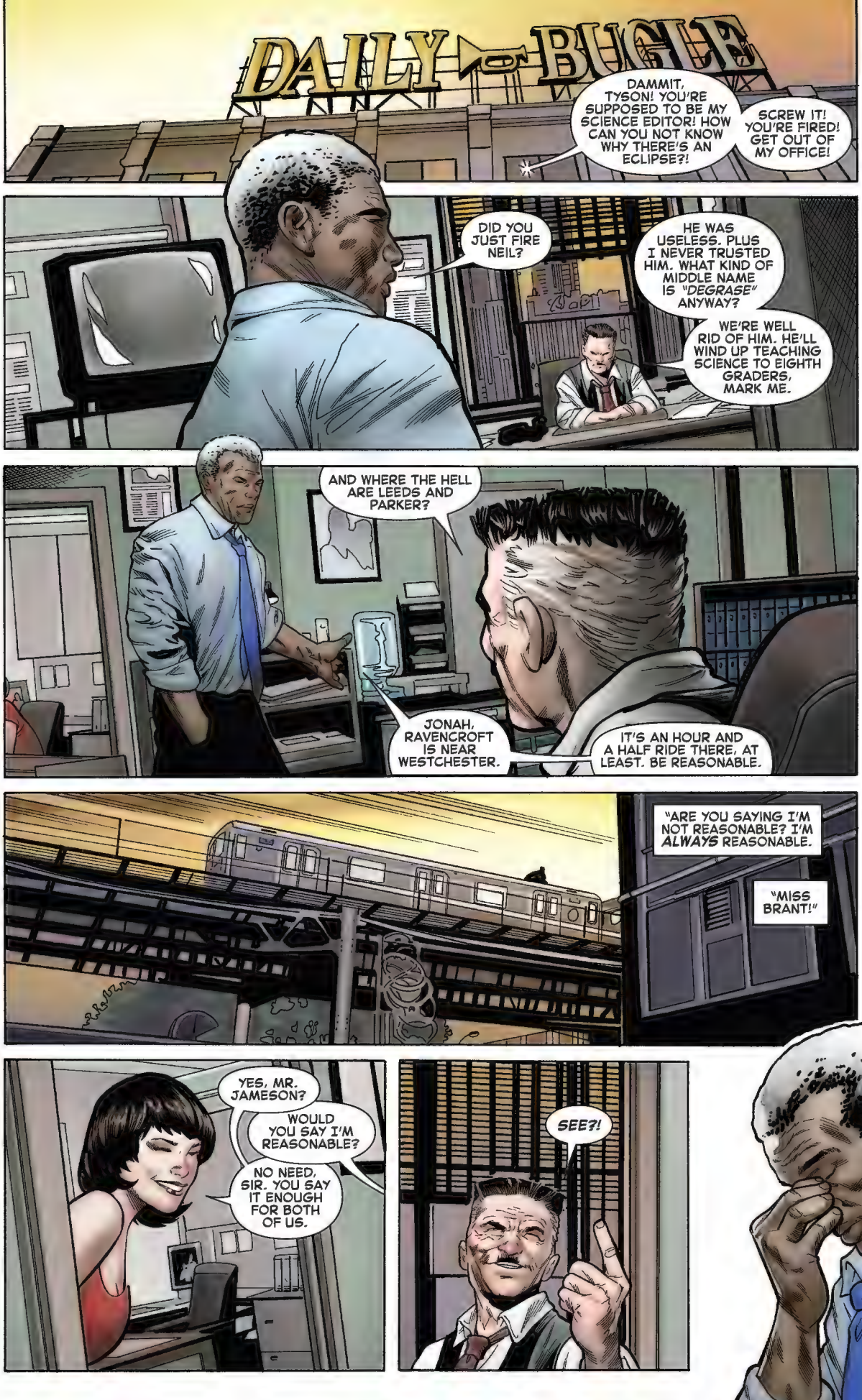
SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #2

THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT PART TWO

RAVENCROFT. INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE.
SO THIS HAS BEEN A DAY.
WEIRD SHADOW CREATURES INVADE RAVENCROFT, ONE SNATCHES NED LEEDS, THE SUN'S ECLIPSING FOR NO REASON, AND THE ONLY AVENGER TO HELP ME IS *THE BLACK KNIGHT*, A LATTER DAY DON QUIXOTE WITH A SWORD AND AN ATTITUDE.
WHERE THE HECK ARE THEY GOING?!
THEY'RE SCATTERING.
OBVIOUSLY! WHAT ELSE YOU GOT?
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT.
GEEZ, THEY LET ANYBODY INTO THE AVENGERS.
GEEZ, THEY LET ANYBODY INTO THE AVENGERS.
THANKS A LOT.
SORRY. DIDN'T REALIZE I SAID THAT OUT LOUD.

OKAY, LET'S REVIEW: THE SUN'S BEING ECLIPSED, AND WE DON'T KNOW WHY.
WE'VE NO IDEA WHERE THIS MISTER E CHARACTER CAME *FROM* OR WENT *TO*.
AND I HAVE NO IDEA HOW YOU KNEW TO COME HERE.
THAT LAST ONE I CAN ANSWER.
I HAD A VISION OF MERLIN. HE WARNED ME TO COME HERE.
MERLIN...
LIKE...
THE MAGICIAN?
THAT'S CORRECT.
WHAT, DID HE JUST APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE?
YES.
CRIPES!!!

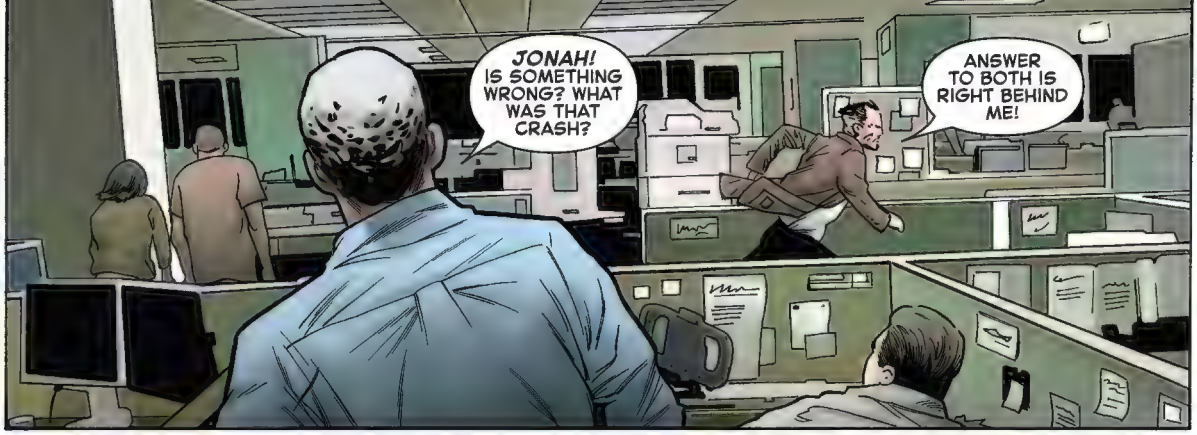
I APOLOGIZE IF I STARTLED YOU.
IF?!
GOD, SO THAT'S WHAT IT FEELS LIKE WHEN YOUR HEART SKIPS A BEAT.
THIS IS AN UNUSUAL DISPLAY OF YOUR POWER, WIZARD. BACK AT AVENGERS MANSION, YOU CAME TO ME IN A DREAM.
MATTERS ARE PROGRESSING FAR TOO RAPIDLY FOR ME TO WAIT FOR YOU TO BE ASLEEP AGAIN.
YOU MUST RETURN TO THE MANSE IMMEDIATELY. YOUR PRESENCE IS REQUIRED THERE.
AS FOR YOU, YOU MUST RETURN TO THE OFFICE OF THE... WHAT IS THE WORD?
NEWSPAPER.
THE BUGLE? WHY?
"THE SHADOW YOU CALL NED LEEDS IS HEADING THERE TO DISPATCH ITS OWNER.
"APPARENTLY BEING POSSESSED UNLEASHES THOSE SENTIMENTS ONE ORDINARILY KEEPS HIDDEN."
HOLY CRAP, HE'S GONNA KILL JAMESON. I HAVE TO STOP HIM!
I...DO HAVE TO STOP HIM, RIGHT?
YES!!!
KIDDING, KIDDING.
SHEESH.


DAILY BUGLE
DAMMIT, TYSON! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE MY SCIENCE EDITOR! HOW CAN YOU NOT KNOW WHY THERE'S AN ECLIPSE?!
SCREW IT! YOU'RE FIRED! GET OUT OF MY OFFICE!
DID YOU JUST FIRE NEIL?
HE WAS USELESS. PLUS I NEVER TRUSTED HIM. WHAT KIND OF MIDDLE NAME IS "DEGRASE" ANYWAY?
WE'RE WELL RID OF HIM. HE'LL WIND UP TEACHING SCIENCE TO EIGHTH GRADERS, MARK ME.
AND WHERE THE HELL ARE LEEDS AND PARKER?
JONAH, RAVENCROFT IS NEAR WESTCHESTER.
IT'S AN HOUR AND A HALF RIDE THERE, AT LEAST. BE REASONABLE.
"ARE YOU SAYING I'M NOT REASONABLE? I'M *ALWAYS* REASONABLE.
"MISS BRANT!"
YES, MR. JAMESON?
WOULD YOU SAY I'M REASONABLE?
NO NEED, SIR. YOU SAY IT ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF US.
SEE?!

BUGLE
NO... STOP IT...
GET OUT OF...MY HEAD...
I WON'T... DO IT...I WON'T--
YOU KNOW YOU WANT TO.
NO... IT'S NOT... TRUE...
YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME. I KNOW WHAT YOU KEEP BOTTLED UP.
I KNOW WHO AND WHAT YOU REALLY ARE.
YOU... YOU DON'T... YOU--
DENIAL WILL GET YOU NOWHERE. NOW HOLD STILL...
THERE. THAAAT'S BETTER.

TO HELL WITH THIS! I DON'T CARE IF HE IS THE PRESIDENT!
SIR, YOU'RE RUNNING LATE FOR THE EDITORIAL MEETING.
I'M NEVER LATE. IT STARTS WHEN I GET THERE.
ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES WHEN YOU'RE IN CHARGE OF--
MISS BRANT, WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU?
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST!

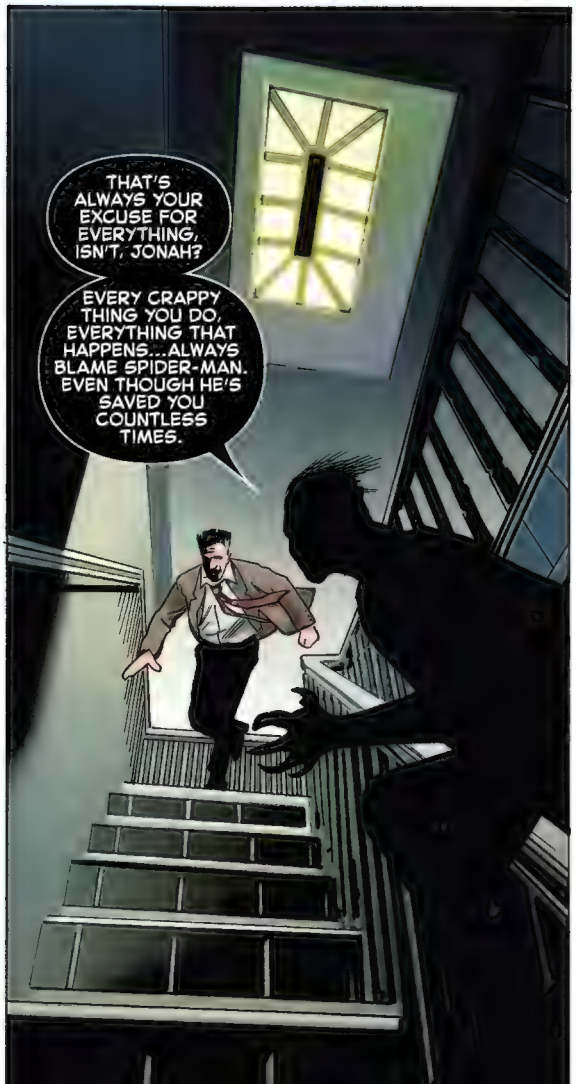
CRASH
WHAT THE--?!
HI, JONAH. LET'S TALK.
N-NED--?!
HI, HONEY.
I'M HOME.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, JONAH? WE HAVE SO MUCH TO CATCH UP ON.


JONAH! IS SOMETHING WRONG? WHAT WAS THAT CRASH?
ANSWER TO BOTH IS RIGHT BEHIND ME!

HOLY--!

HUFF
HUFF

I...I DON'T KNOW...WHAT HAPPENED...
...BUT SOMEHOW...
...I KNOW IT'S SPIDER-MAN'S FAULT!


THAT'S ALWAYS YOUR EXCUSE FOR EVERYTHING, ISN'T, JONAH?
EVERY CRAPPY THING YOU DO, EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS...ALWAYS BLAME SPIDER-MAN. EVEN THOUGH HE'S SAVED YOU COUNTLESS TIMES.

ACCCKKK!
TOO BAD HE'S NOT HERE TO RESCUE YOU THIS TIME!

KRAAAASH

VAAAAM
I'M BILLING YOU FOR THAT SKYLIGHT!

AVENGERS MANSION.
OKAY, MERLIN, I'M BACK. SHOW YOURSELF.
IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BLACK KNIGHT.
WISH I COULD SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM. WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE SUN?
A GREAT EVIL...
THAT ONLY YOUR SWORD CAN DETER.
THE *EBONY BLADE?* HOW?
THERE IS A GREAT EVIL ABROAD. THE EBONY BLADE MAY WELL BE ONE OF THE ONLY WEAPONS IN EXISTENCE THAT CAN DEFEAT IT.
DOES THIS GREAT EVIL HAVE A NAME?
IT IS CALLED...
KNULL.

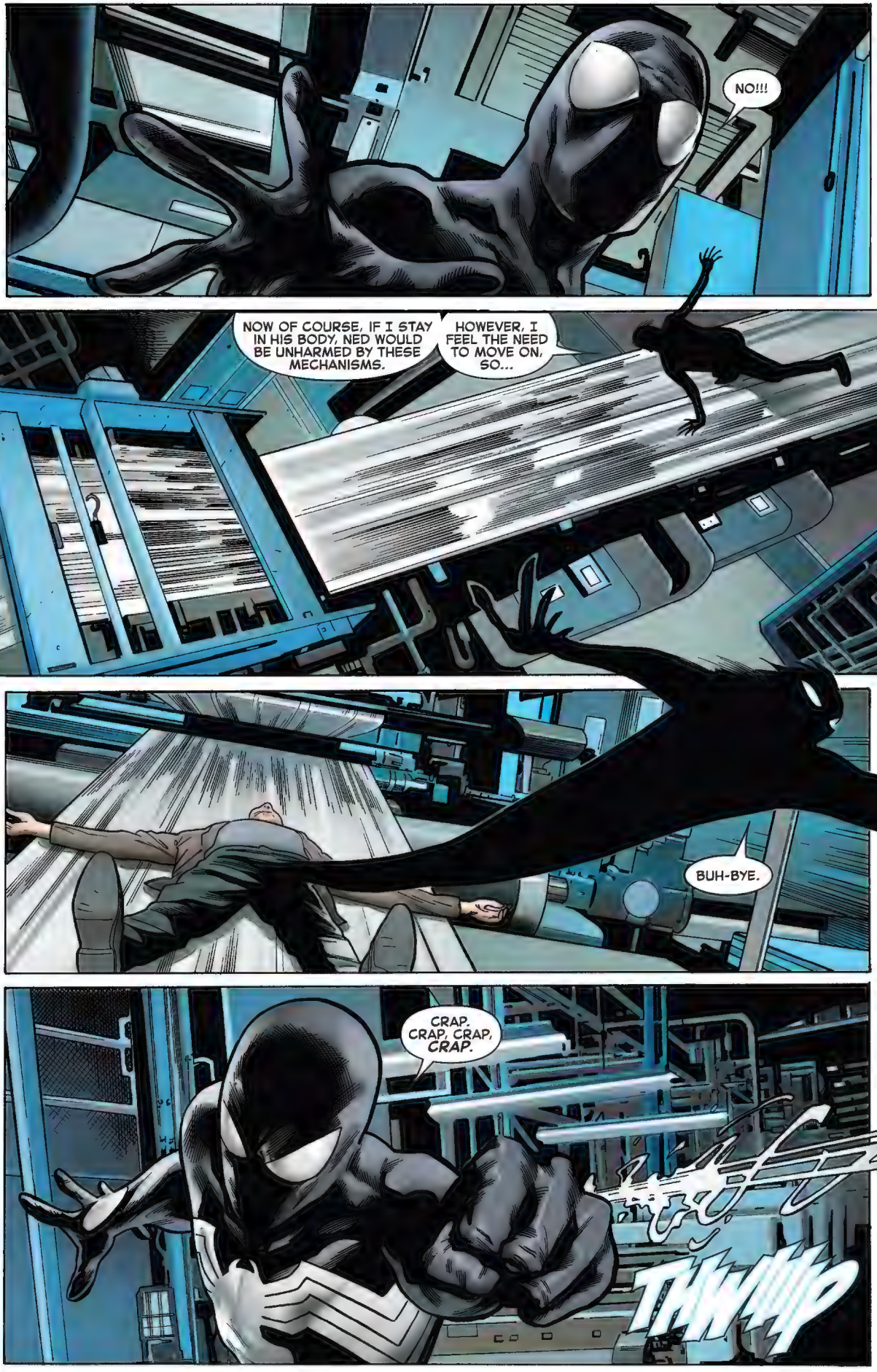
"HIS FOLLOWERS SIMPLY CALL HIM GOD.
"HE IS A CREATURE OF IMMENSE POWER AND POSES A THREAT TO ALL OF TIME AND SPACE.
"AT PRESENT HE IS CONTAINED, BUT ONE DAY THAT CONTAINMENT WILL END AND HE WILL ROAM FREE, LEAVING DESTRUCTION IN HIS WAKE.
I HAVE FORESEEN IT. HIS LIBERATION IS INEVITABLE.
"BUT IT IS MY BELIEF THAT HE IS VULNERABLE TO THE EBONY BLADE. THAT MAY WELL BE THE KEY TO DEFEATING HIM.
"I CAN INCREASE THE MAGIC IT ALREADY CONTAINS AND ELEVATE IT TO THE POINT OF BEING AN ABSOLUTELY LETHAL WEAPON AGAINST HIM."

GIVE ME THE SWORD, BLACK KNIGHT. AND I WILL TEND TO IT.
WHAT'S MY NAME?
PARDON?
YOU KEEP CALLING ME BLACK KNIGHT.
YOU ARE THE BLACK KNIGHT.
WHAT'S. MY. REAL. NAME?
...
VERY GOOD.

SHADOW CREATURE! SHOW YOURSELF!
I SAID SHOW YOURSELF, YOU CRAVEN--
NOW, NOW...
THERE'S NO NEED TO HURL INSULTS.
EVERYTHING I TOLD YOU WAS TRUE.
ALL I LIED ABOUT...

...WAS WHICH SIDE I WAS ON.
SHUNK
TAKING OVER THE SWORD WAS NO PROBLEM ONCE YOU STABBED ME WITH IT.
AND TRUST ME...MY FOLLOWERS AND I HAVE VERY SPECIFIC PLANS FOR THE BLADE.
TRAGICALLY, THOSE PLANS DON'T INCLUDE YOU.

MEANWHILE...
HOLY--!
HOW ARE YOU ABLE TO KEEP TOUCHING ME?!
CLEAN LIVING AND FANCY FOOTWORK.
NO, IT'S MORE THAN THAT.
YOU'RE ONE OF US. CAN'T YOU FEEL IT? WE ARE KIN.
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO WAIT AROUND FOR YOU TO REALIZE IT.


NO!!!
NOW OF COURSE, IF I STAY IN HIS BODY, NED WOULD BE UNHARMED BY THESE MECHANISMS.
HOWEVER, I FEEL THE NEED TO MOVE ON, SO...
BUH-BYE.
CRAP. CRAP, CRAP, CRAP.
THWIP

W-what...? How did--?
WHOA!!!
YOU OKAY, NED?
FINE... I'M FINE... I'M...
AVENGERS MANSION! THAT... THAT THING THAT TOOK ME OVER...
IT'S HEADING TO AVENGERS MANSION!
WHAT? ARE YOU SURE?
YEAH. IT WAS INSIDE MY HEAD, BUT I WAS INSIDE ITS AS WELL. TWO-WAY STREET.
OH NO... THE BLACK KNIGHT...
IT WAS A TRAP...

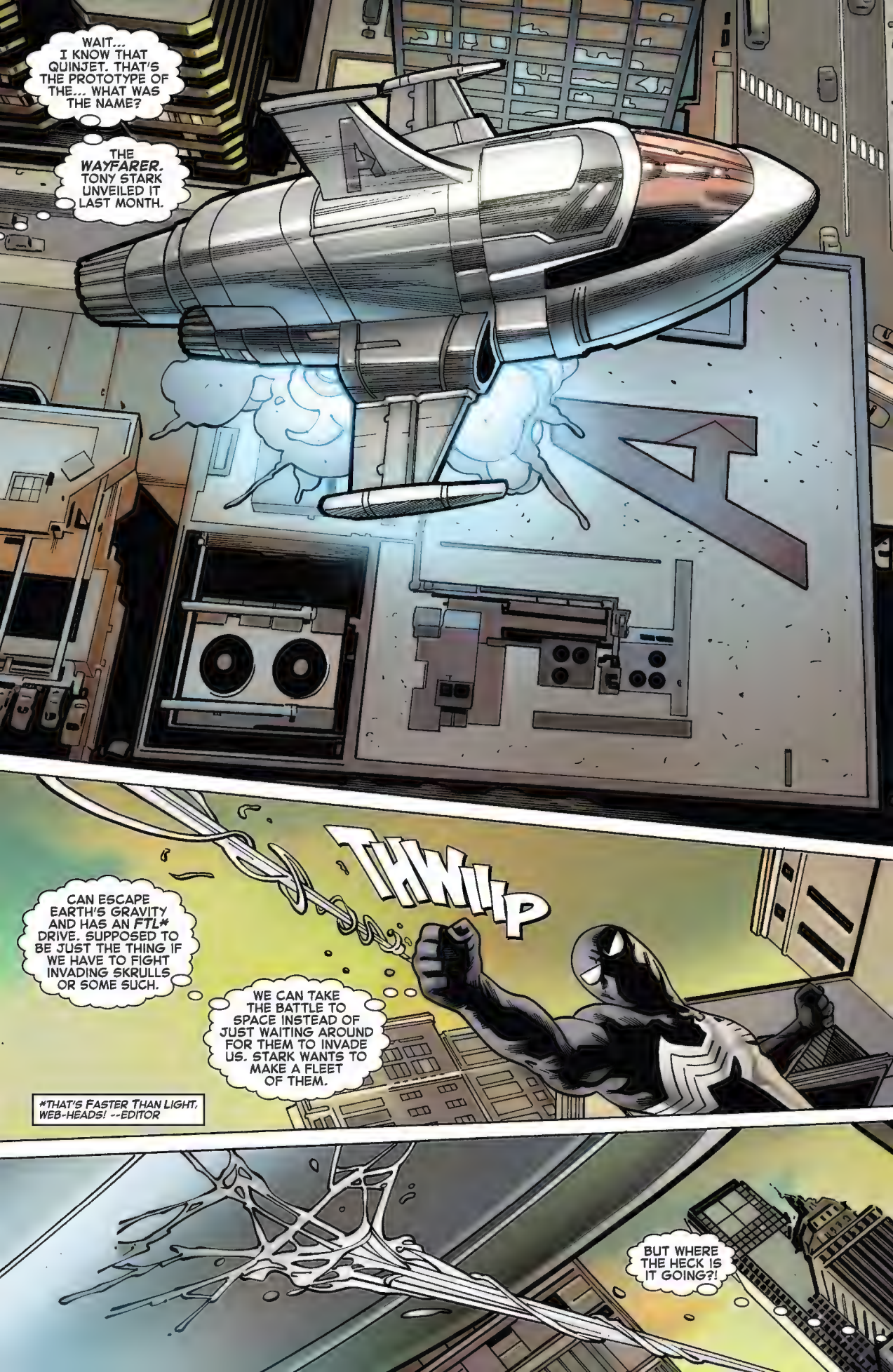
"...AND THE BLACK KNIGHT SPRUNG IT."
Unhh...
FOUND HIM!
Oh... perfect...
DON'T MOVE.
Shut up...
WHAT PART OF "DON'T MOVE" DIDN'T YOU GET?

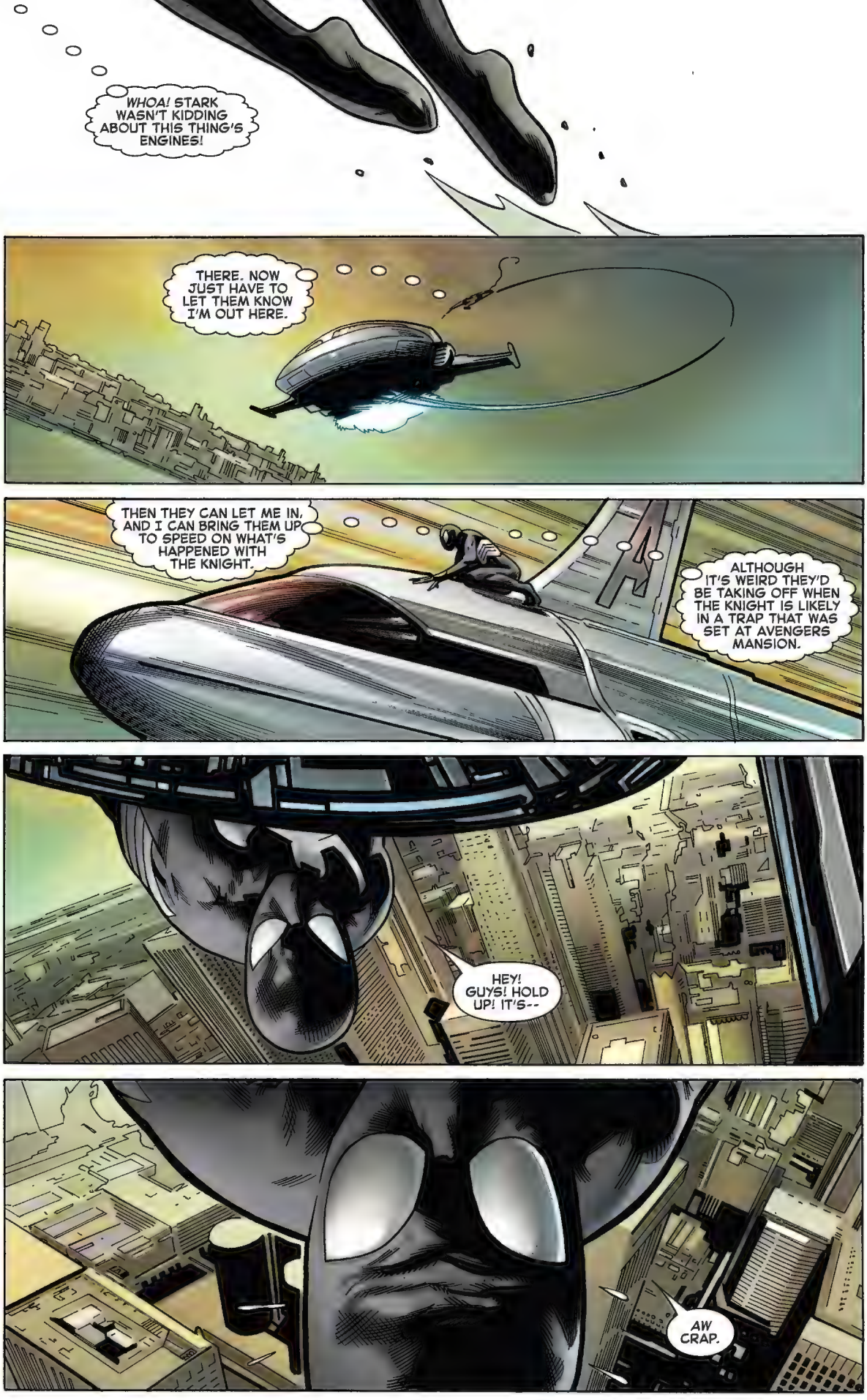
Oh... good...I'm just hallucinating...was worried...for a sec--
THUD
HE DEAD? NOT THAT FAMILIAR WITH HUMANS, SO IT'S KINDA HARD TO TELL.
MY SENSORS INDICATE NO. HE'S BARELY HANGING ON, THOUGH.
GOOD. LET'S GET HIM OUTTA HERE...
...BEFORE THINGS GET WORSE.

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #3

THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT PART THREE

THIS SHOULD'VE BEEN AN EASY DAY.
GO WITH NED TO AN INSANE ASYLUM AND INTERVIEW SOME CRAZY GUY IN A WHEELCHAIR. EASY PEASY.
NEXT THING I KNOW, THE SUN'S GOING OUT, NED'S INHABITED BY SOME SHADOW CREATURE AND THE BLACK KNIGHT IS GETTING VISITS FROM MERLIN.
AND NOW THE KNIGHT'S IN SOME KINDA TROUBLE, AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S GOING--
RMMMMMMMBLE
WAIT. WHAT'S THAT ROARING NOISE COMING FROM THE MANS--?
WHOA.


WAIT... I KNOW THAT QUINJET. THAT'S THE PROTOTYPE OF THE... WHAT WAS THE NAME?
THE *WAYFARER.* TONY STARK UNVEILED IT LAST MONTH.
THWIIP
CAN ESCAPE EARTH'S GRAVITY AND HAS AN *FTL** DRIVE. SUPPOSED TO BE JUST THE THING IF WE HAVE TO FIGHT INVADING SKRULLS OR SOME SUCH.
WE CAN TAKE THE BATTLE TO SPACE INSTEAD OF JUST WAITING AROUND FOR THEM TO INVADE US. STARK WANTS TO MAKE A FLEET OF THEM.
*THAT'S FASTER THAN LIGHT, WEB-HEADS! --EDITOR
BUT WHERE THE HECK IS IT GOING?!


WHOA! STARK WASN'T KIDDING ABOUT THIS THING'S ENGINES!
THERE. NOW JUST HAVE TO LET THEM KNOW I'M OUT HERE.
THEN THEY CAN LET ME IN, AND I CAN BRING THEM UP TO SPEED ON WHAT'S HAPPENED WITH THE KNIGHT.
ALTHOUGH IT'S WEIRD THEY'D BE TAKING OFF WHEN THE KNIGHT IS LIKELY IN A TRAP THAT WAS SET AT AVENGERS MANSION.
HEY! GUYS! HOLD UP! IT'S--
AW CRAP.

WELL, WELL. HELLO, SPIDER-MAN...
...AND GOODBYE.
SO DIZZY... COULDN'T HOLD ON!
GOTTA...
OH, NOW WHAT?!
SPIDER-MAN, CORRECT?
NOT QUITE AS IDENTIFIABLE A COSTUME, BUT THE LARGE ARACHNID ON YOUR CHEST IS A DEAD GIVEAWAY.

KRAASH
OH, NOW WHAT?!

HOW *DARE* YOU?!
PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS ASKING ME THAT. HOW "*DARE*" I.
THEY'RE ALWAYS SO SURPRISED.
LIKE THEY THINK I PUT ON THIS COSTUME SO I CAN KNOCK ON DOORS AND GET CANDY.
THWIP
AND NONE OF YOU UNDERSTAND.

I'LL DARE ANYTHING!!!
WHA

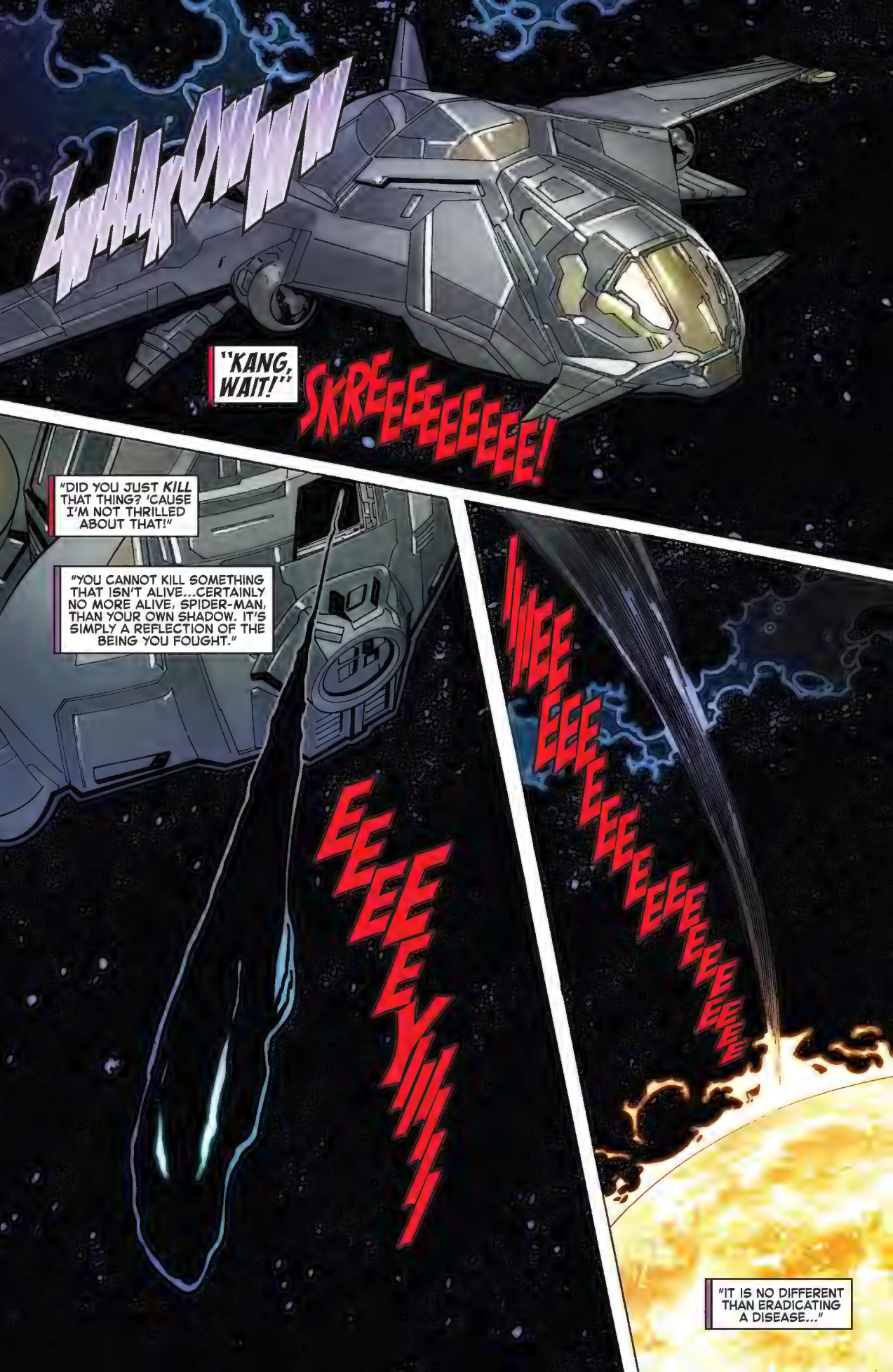
RIGHT.
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT.
WHAM
FOR SOMEONE CLEVER ENOUGH TO DEVISE YOUR WEBBING, YOU REALLY ARE SOMETHING OF AN IDIOT.
YOU'RE ENCOUNTERING SOMEONE WHO CAN STOP *THE MIGHTY THOR* IN HIS TRACKS.
DO YOU SERIOUSLY BELIEVE *YOU* PRESENT A THREAT?
FOR GOD'S SAKE, YOU MORON, WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE HERE.
RIGHT. *SURE WE ARE.*
THAT'S RIGHT, DUMMY. *YOU ARE.*
What the absolute heck?

ARE YOU OKAY?
HE HAS NOTHING IN HIS ARSENAL OF TRICKS THAT CAN--
ARE YOU OKAY?
YES!
HUMANS! YAK, YAK, YAK. CAN'T JUST ANSWER A SIMPLE QUESTION.
NO WONDER YOU'RE THE DOMINANT SPECIES. YOU PROB'LY BORED ALL THE OTHERS TO DEATH.
SO I KNOW KANG'S DEAL. WHAT'S YOURS?
I'M... SPIDER-MAN?
YOU CERTAIN? YOU DON'T SOUND SURE.
I'M SPIDER-MAN.
I'M ROCKET.
ROCKET RACCOON? LIKE THE BEATLES SONG?
WHAT'S A BEATLES?

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON, ANYWAY?
WHAT KINDA STUPID QUESTION IS THAT?
YOU'RE WORKING WITH *HIM!* KANG'S A NOTORIOUS PSYCHOPATH!
I TOLD YOU ONCE ALREADY, YOU AND I ARE ON THE--
THE SAME SIDE, RIGHT, LIKE I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE THAT.
I'M TRYING TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE!
AND WHY WOULD *YOU* BE TRYING TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE?
BECAUSE I *LIVE WITHIN IT*, YOU IDIOT! WHY ELSE DO YOU THINK WE'RE HEALING *HIM?*
HEALING...?
HOLY...
THE BLACK KNIGHT! WHAT... WHAT *HAPPENED...?* HOW DID HE GET *HERE?*

APPARENTLY HE WAS *STABBED*. WERE IT NOT FOR ROCKET'S HEALING BAY, HE WOULD HAVE BLED OUT ON THE FLOOR OF AVENGERS MANSION.
SINCE HIS SWORD IS MISSING, I ASSUME THAT WAS THE WEAPON USED.
BY WHOM?
I PRESUME...
...BY ONE OF *THOSE*.
A SHADOW MINION...?
YOU KNOW THEM?
KNOW THEM? NO. FOUGHT THEM? YEAH. SOME KIND OF SHADOWY, ALIEN CREATURES, I THINK. BIG ON TAKING OVER PEOPLE.
KEPT CLAIMING *I'M* ONE OF THEM. NO IDEA WHAT THAT'S ABOUT.
NO. NO, YOU WOULDN'T, WOULD YOU.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
YOU'LL FIND OUT...
...IN DUE TIME.

I WILL KILL YOU ALL...
YES, I'M QUITE SURE YOU BELIEVE THAT.
I DO MORE THAN BELIEVE. I KNOW.
REALLY?
ALLOW ME TO TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW.
I KNOW THAT I HAVE RIGGED THIS TUBE TO EXTRICATE YOU FROM YOUR HOST. UPON MY SIGNAL, IT WILL BLAST YOU OFF INTO SPACE...
...AND DIRECTLY INTO THE SUN WE'RE PASSING.
I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU TRY!
OH, GOOD.


KRAKOW!!!
"KANG, WAIT!"
SKREEEEEEEEEE!
"DID YOU JUST KILL THAT THING? 'CAUSE I'M NOT THRILLED ABOUT THAT!"
"YOU CANNOT KILL SOMETHING THAT ISN'T ALIVE...CERTAINLY NO MORE ALIVE, SPIDER-MAN, THAN YOUR OWN SHADOW. IT'S SIMPLY A REFLECTION OF THE BEING YOU FOUGHT."
EEEEEEEEE

...FROM A PATIENT.
OH... WONDERFUL.
WELL, I'LL BE.
SO WHO'S THE GIRL?
CAPTAIN MARVEL.
NOT ANYMORE.
NAH. CAPTAIN MARVEL'S A KREE GUY.
CAP? YOU OKAY?
I... I'M NOT SURE...
WHERE... AM I...?
SPIDER-MAN? IS THAT YOU...?
YEAH. LOOK, UH--

KANG!!!

AND HERE WE GO.

WHA--?! WHERE'D SHE GO?
SHE'S GONE INFRARED. AS SUCH, SHE'S INTANGIBLE. FORTUNATELY...
...IT'S NOTHING MY FORCE-FIELD CANNOT HANDLE.
WAAAAAM
WHY DO YOU PEOPLE ALWAYS GREET EACH OTHER BY LAUNCHING INTO A FIGHT?! DON'T ANY OF YOU SHAKE HANDS?!
IS THIS... A TALKING RACCOON?
WHAT THE HELL'S A RACCOON?
RODENTS.
THAT EAT GARBAGE.
SHADDUP!

MINUTES LATER...
I'M NOT SURE *WHAT* HAPPENED. ONE MINUTE I WAS TAKING A NAP, AND THE NEXT...
...THIS *SHADOWY* THING HAD TAKEN ME OVER. IT WAS INSIDE MY HEAD...
SAME THING HAPPENED TO A FRIEND OF MINE. HE SAID THAT HE WAS INSIDE ITS HEAD AS WELL.
YES! YES, I WAS. I...I COULD HEAR ITS THOUGHTS.
ALL THESE SHADOW MINDS... THEY'RE LINKED. WHAT ONE KNOWS, *ALL OF THEM KNOW.*
DID THEY TAKE THE BLACK KNIGHT'S SWORD?
YES, THEY DID. THEY'RE AFRAID OF IT.
THEY THINK IT CAN DESTROY THEIR LORD AND MASTER.
SO WE NEED TO GET IT BACK AND USE IT OURSELVES.
OH, RIGHT. KANG THE GOOD SAMARITAN.
YOU WANT TO BRING THAT SWORD TO THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS?
BULL. YOU JUST WANT TO RULE.
TRUE. SO TELL ME...
WHO WOULD I RULE IF EVERYONE WERE *DEAD?*
...

FINE. BUT WE'RE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THIS LATER.
I CAN'T WAIT.
ENOUGH! WE'VE GOT BIGGER PROBLEMS. NAMELY, HOW'RE THEY GOING TO DESTROY THE SWORD?
OBVIOUS. THEY'LL THROW IT INTO A SUN.
That won't do it...
It could survive a sun easily.
Barely...
DANE! YOU'RE ALIVE!
ARE YOU KIDDING, BK? DO YOU KNOW HOW HOT THE SUN IS?
EARTH'S SUN? ABOUT SIX THOUSAND KELVIN.
WHAT HE SAID! OVER TEN THOUSAND DEGREES FAHRENHEIT! NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND THAT!
"It is no normal blade... Merlin forged it...from the Starstone... It's as much magic...as anything else.
"Trust me...a star...wouldn't do it."

WE DON'T HAVE TO GUESS. I KNOW WHERE THEY'RE TAKING IT.
KNOWHERE.
"NOWHERE"? WHY DOES THIS SOUND LIKE THE START OF AN ABBOTT AND COSTELLO ROUTINE?
K-N-O-W. KNOWHERE. I KNOW THE PLACE.
IT'S A PLACE?
"IT'S A GIANT SPACE STATION AT THE END OF THE UNIVERSE. THE SEVERED HEAD OF A CELESTIAL.
"VARIOUS RACES SET UP SHOP THERE TO DO BORING SCIENTIFIC STUFF, PLUS THERE'S A MARKETPLACE THERE..."

OF COURSE! I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF IT IMMEDIATELY.
THERE'S SOMEONE IN THE MARKET I'VE HEARD OF WHO COULD DESTROY IT! SHE WIELDS BOTH METAL AND MAGIC.
WHO?
"SHE'S A TROLL WHO FORGES WEAPONS FOR SOME OF THE MORE BARBARIC RACES OUT THERE."
"A TROLL? LIKE THE KIND THOR FIGHTS?"
"THAT'S RIGHT, SPIDER-MAN. SHE ACTUALLY USED TO LIVE IN NORNHEIM, I UNDERSTAND, BUT SHE RELOCATED TO KNOWHERE."
YOU ARE ULICIA?
I HAVE SOMETHING I NEED DESTROYED.
"WHY DID SHE RELOCATE TO KNOWHERE?"
"TO GET AWAY FROM HER BROTHER. HE WANTED TO KILL HER. APPARENTLY IT'S A TROLLISH CUSTOM."
OH NO.
WHAT'S HAPPENING? WHY IS EVERYTHING SHAKING?
HE FOUND ME. AFTER ALL THIS TIME...HE'S COMING.
"WAIT...WHO'S HER BROTHER?"

"I BELIEVE HIS NAME IS...
"ULIK."

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #4

THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT PART FOUR

KNOWHERE.
DAMNATION!
WHAT IN THE--?
ULICIA?!
ARRRRHHH!!
HAH! THAT WASN'T SO DIFFICULT!
SO WHERE DOES YOUR SOUL GO WHEN YOU DIE, TROLL? VALHALLA? OBLIVION?
SEEMS YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

KLAAAANG
NOBODY KILLS MY BROTHER EXCEPT ME.
MAKE ME.
OUT OF MY WAY, TROLL!
AS YOU WISH.
I CAME HERE TO HAVE YOU DESTROY THIS BLADE FOR ME!
BUT NO, YOU HAD TO MAKE THIS DIFFICULT. YOU STUPID--
TWAZZAAAAK

IDIOT.
YOU OKAY, ULICIA?
I'M FINE, COSMO. THANKS FOR STEPPING IN...
I'M HEAD OF SECURITY FOR REASON.
WHAT WAS HAPPENINK HERE?
WELL, THAT SHADOWY CREATURE WANTED ME TO DESTROY HIS SWORD, AND THEN MY BROTHER CAME CRASHING IN...
WHAT BROTHER?
OHHHH PEANUTS.
WELL, THIS HASN'T GONE THE WAY I WANTED IT T--
GIVE IT HERE!!!
YES, I'LL GET RIGHT ON THAT.

KRAAASH
FOOL.
WHO'S THE GREATER FOOL? THE FOOL OR THE FOOL WHO FOLLOWS HIM?
STAR WARS QUOTE. YOU'RE A SPACE GUY, SO I FIGURED IT WAS APPROPRIATE.
WAAAAM

HOW IN THE BLAZES DID YOU GET HERE?!
HITCHED A RIDE WITH A TALKING RACCOON.
YOU'LL LOVE HIM.
AND YOU WILL LOVE BEING CUT TO PIECES!
BETTING I WON'T.
HERE. BETTER GIVE ME THAT BEFORE YOU HURT YOURSELF WITH IT.
THWIIIP

LET... GO!
SAYS THE SHADOW GUY ABOUT THE SWORD HE STOLE? YEAH, I DON'T THINK SO.
ZWAAAK
OH, NOW WHAT?!
HUH. OKAY, THAT'S WEIRD.
FINE! LET'S KICK IT UP A NOTCH!
ZWAAAK ZWAAAK
WHOA! ROCKET! WATCH WHERE YOU'RE SHOOTING, DUDE!
KEEP FIRING, IDIOT. SEE IF I CARE.

LET'S TEST THE ENERGY ABSORPTION PROWESS OF THIS BLA--
AH!!!
EXCELLENT!
ZWAAAK
ZWAKAMM
ZWAKAMM
UH-OH.
IDIOT.
GOOD TIMING.
YES, WELL, THAT COMES WITH BEING A TIME-TRAVELER.
AW, C'MON!!!
I'M LEARNING, SPIDER-MAN. ADAPTING. WHAT WORKED FOR YOU ONCE WILL NOT CONTINUE TO DO SO.

OOOOFF!
MY ATTACKS, ON THE OTHER HAND, CONTINUE TO FUNCTION JUST FINE.
RELAX, BOYS. CAPTAIN MARVEL HAS GOT THIS!
WHAT-- WHAT ARE YOU--
--DOING?!
FILLING YOU WITH ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT, WHICH IS SOLIDIFYING YOU!
SPIDEY! ROCKET! TAKE HIM!

HE'S TOOK!!!
WAAAAH!

NOW WE'RE TALKIN'!
TIME TO PUT AN END TO THIS BATTLE.
OUT OF THE WAY, SPIDER-MAN. ONE SIDE, CAPTAIN.
NO!!!
ALL YOURS.
DO YOU SERIOUSLY THINK YOU CAN THWART THE WILL OF *THE DARK LORD?* YOUR ATTEMPTS ARE AS NOTHING TO HIM!
I DO NOT ATTEMPT. I SUCCEED.

I'LL...I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS! I SWEAR I'LL--
--KILLLL YOOoooOUuu...
SMYTHE!
UNNHHH...
WELL, HE'S STILL ALIVE, FOR WHAT THAT'S WORTH.
WHERE DID YOU SEND MR. E?
I MADE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS IN ANTICIPATION OF NEEDING SOMEWHERE SECURE TO DEPOSIT HIM.

IN ANOTHER PART OF THE GALAXY...
LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT!!!
...THE COLLECTOR'S SHOWROOM
OH, I DON'T THINK SO. I'VE NO IDEA WHERE YOU'VE COME FROM...
...BUT THE COLLECTOR DOESN'T HABITUALLY RELEASE HIS PRIZES JUST BECAUSE THEY ASK HIM TO.
"NOW, SPIDER-MAN... LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION TO OTHER MATTERS."
OTHER MATTERS? KANG, IF I FIND OUT THAT CREATURE HAS BEEN HARMED...
I'M TRUSTING YOU.
DON'T MAKE ME REGRET IT.
WAIT... WHERE'S THE SWORD?

GODS, IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME A WEEK TO CLEAN UP THIS MESS.
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST PACK UP. NOW THAT ULIK KNOWS I'M HERE, HE MAY COME BACK TO--
HAH!!!
THERE'S A DOOR *RIGHT THERE! RIGHT BLOODY THERE!*
WOULD IT *KILL* YOU TO USE IT? *REALLY?!*
WHY DON'T I JUST KILL *YOU* AND SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE?!
I STOPPED THAT SHADOW THING FROM KILLING YOU!
WAS THAT A MISTAKE?

YES!!!
TROLL SIBLINGS ALWAYS SLAY EACH OTHER! THAT WAY THE STRONGEST SURVIVES!
YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD ESCAPE YOUR FATE!
I DIDN'T WANT TO KILL YOU!
WELL, THAT WAS YOUR MISTAKE!
ZWOOP
WHAT THE--?!
TAKE HIM.
HE'S TOOK!
ARRRHHGGGHH!

YOU OKAY?
Again... doors... What is with you people...?
CAN'T A TROLL KILL HIS SISTER IN PEACE?
'FRAID NOT, BOZO!
KRAK
NOT AS LONG AS THE HEROES--
KRAK
KRAK
--ARE HERE TO STOP YOU!

YOU'RE JOKING, RIGHT?
UH-OH.
BHWAAAK
WHOA!
WHERE'D THAT COME FROM?!
DID...DID YOU JUST DO...?
UH, DO YOU TALK?
YES.
OF COURSE HE DOES.
'CAUSE I HITCHED A RIDE HERE WITH A TALKING RACCOON AND AN AVENGERS VILLAIN, SO NATURALLY...
SORRY, CANNOT STAY-- KIND OF BUSY.
OH, DON'T LET ME STOP YOU.

THIS PLACE IS INSANE!
AS INSANE AS TROLLS HAVING A TRADITION OF KILLING THEIR SIBLINGS?
YOU CANNOT HOPE TO UNDERSTAND THE THOUGHT PROCESS OF TROLLS!
YOU HAVE A THOUGHT PROCESS? COLOR ME SURPRISED!
TAKE HIM, GUYS!!!

UNNH!!!
STOP! STOP HURTING HIM!!!
Didn't... hurt...just getting... second wind...
I FLED ALL THE WAY TO THE MIDDLE OF KNOWHERE TO AVOID YOU, AND YOU STILL CAN'T LEAVE ME ALONE!
DIDN'T... KNOW YOU WERE HERE... CAME FOR THE SWORD...
WHY?
YOU'RE AN IDIOT!!!
WAAAAM
YEAH, I WAS KIND OF WONDERING THAT MYSELF.

I SENT HIM.
HOLY...
I SENT HIM HERE...
...TO GET THE SWORD.
DO... DO I WANNA KNOW WHY?
TO DESTROY THE BEING WHO WANTS TO ANNIHILATE THE UNIVERSE.
THE BEING CALLED *KNULL*.

WH-WHERE AM I...?
HUH?
WH--WHAT'S HAPPENING...?
I'M TAKINK YOU HOME.
WHAT THE--?!
I'VE EXTRACTED YOUR HOME LOCATION FROM YOUR MIND. OH, AND ALL THESE PEOPLE WHO WERE POSSESSED BY THE SHADOW CREATURE? THEY ALL WANT TO BEAT YOU TO DEATH.
I'M STOPPINK THEM.
FOR NOW.
OH... OKAY... UH...
NICE DOGGY?

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #5

THE SWORD AND THE SPIRIT PART FIVE

THE COLLECTOR'S SHOWROOM
PLEASE, MY LORD...I BEG YOU...TO RESTORE THE POWER YOU TOOK FROM ME AFTER MY PREVIOUS FAILURE. I SWEAR I WILL NOT LET YOU DOWN AGAIN...
YOU ASK FOR MY TRUST, DO YOU? I SHOULD TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT?
THE SWORD REMAINS A THREAT TO YOU, MY LORD. I CAN RID YOU OF IT FOREVER.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, MY CHILD, YOU HAVE CAUGHT ME IN A GENEROUS MOOD.
EH?
VERY WELL... I RESTORE YOUR POWER. NO LONGER NEED YOU INHABIT ANYONE. YOU ARE NOW ONCE AGAIN...
KRAAAAK
...YOURSELF!

WHO'D'VE THOUGHT THEY HAVE MOCKTAILS IN KNOWWHERE.
OKAY. RUN THIS BY ME AGAIN...
SLOWLY.
I REQUIRED *THIS SWORD*-- *THE EBONY BLADE* TO USE AGAINST A GODLIKE BEING CALLED *KNULL*...
YOU KNOW YOU CAN SIT.
I DO NOT SIT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN I DO NOT SIT. I ALWAYS STAND.
LIKE A HORSE?
I SUPPOSE.
EXCEPT YOU'RE NOT A HORSE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
I NEED ANOTHER DRINK. KEEP TALKING.

THIS BLADE, IF WIELDED BY THE PROPER HAND, COULD PERHAPS SLAY THIS GOD-LIKE BEING.
YOUR HAND, I ASSUME?
I AM SWORN TO ONLY OBSERVE.
THEN PERHAPS SOMEONE MORE WILLING TO WIELD A WEAPON SHOULD BE THE ONE TO BEAR THAT BLADE.
YER TALKIN' ABOUT YERSELF, KANG?
WHO BETTER?
THE BLACK KNIGHT. HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO'S BEEN ABLE TO WIELD THE BLADE AND HURT THESE CREATURES.
BUT YOU, KANG? HANDLING A UNIVERSE-DESTROYING WEAPON? THAT'S A MATCH I'D NEVER WANT TO SEE.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO REMIND YOU IT IS MY UNIVERSE AS WELL?
SO WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TRUST YOU BECAUSE YOU SAY SO?
OKAY, OKAY, JUST EVERYBODY STAY CALM, ALL RIGHT?
GOTCHA COVERED THERE.
HECK, BRING IN SHADOW BOY-- I'LL TAKE HIM ON WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT.

I AM RESTORED! I AM MYSELF! I AM, NOW AND FOREVER...
...MR. E!!!
I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF THERE'S SOMETHING IN THIS CRAZY CONCOCTION.
AT LEAST NOW WE KNOW KANG DIDN'T *VAPORIZE* HIM.

YOU HAVE A WEAK GRIP, WATCHER! ONE THAT MR. E IS EASILY ABLE TO BREAK!
GUYS WHO REFER TO THEMSELVES IN THE THIRD PERSON ARE NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.
EVEN SPIDER-MAN *HATES* THE ONES WHO DO.
YOU DON'T SEEM TO REALIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF YOUR SITUATION, BROTHER!
SERIOUSNESS?!
I WAS FLOWN HERE BY A *TALKING RACCOON* AND AN *AVENGERS VILLAIN*...
...TO A PLACE WHERE THE HEAD OF SECURITY IS A TALKING DOG...
...AND A TROLL BROTHER IS RITUALISTICALLY HUNTING HIS SISTER!
ALL TO FIGHT A VILLAIN WHO THINKS HE'S *MY* BROTHER!
FORGET SERIOUSNESS...
...AND YOU!!!

OH GOOD. I WAS ABLE TO CONNECT WITH HIM AGAIN.

REJOICE AS YOU WISH, SPIDER-MAN. IT WILL BE THE LAST TIME. FOR I WILL DESTROY THE GALAXY!

THEN CONSIDER US THE *GUARDIANS* OF THE GALAXY!
PRETTY SURE THAT'S ANOTHER GROUP.
SHADDUP! I LIKE IT!

KA-CHUNK
SORRY. AS LONG AS I CONCENTRATE, NOTHING CAN HARM ME!
NOT EVEN ME?!
ESPECIALLY NOT YOU.
AW NUTS.
YOU DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND. YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME.
YOUR PREVIOUS TRICKS WON'T WORK THIS TIME, FOR I AM FULLY MYSELF AGAIN, EMPOWERED AND REINVIGORATED. THANKS TO THE LORD OF THE ABYSS, KNULL...
...I AM MR. E!
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU SAY IT, IT'S STILL A STUPID NAME.

WE'RE NOT FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE. UNDERSTAND?
EXACTLY.
WHO ARE YOU?
WAAAM
UNHHHH...
WHO ARE YOU?
YOU SAID THAT...
NO, SERIOUSLY... I DON'T REMEMBER...
SO EVEN THE GREAT CONQUEROR KNOWS WHEN HE IS OUTMATCHED!
WHA...? NOW WHAT?

MAYBE WE CAN'T HIT YOU, BUT CAP'S RIGHT-- THE BLACK KNIGHT HURT YOU PRETTY BAD WITH THAT SWORD!
SO I THINK WE SHOULD GIVE *THAT* ANOTHER SHOT!
PULL ALL YOU WISH, SPIDER-MAN!
WHAT PART OF BEING UNABLE TO INFLICT HARM ARE YOU NOT UNDERSTANDING?
KEEP POURIN' IT ON!
I *AM!* NOTHING'S *WORKING!*
TO THINK THAT KNULL IS CONCERNED ABOUT YOU!
YOU CANNOT EVEN STOP *ME!*
WHAT POSSIBLE HOPE DO YOU HAVE AGAINST HIM?!
EH?

AH, THE WATCHER... STANDING AND OBSERVING. HOW VERY TYPICAL.
WITH LIFE PASSING ALL AROUND YOU, DO YOU PARTICIPATE? DO YOU ATTEMPT TO AFFECT IT?
DO YOU EVER DO ANYTHING?
NO! YOU JUST OBSERVE! YOU OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES AND RECORD ALL THAT HAPPENS!
BUT YOU ARE SWORN NEVER TO INTERFERE!
YET HERE YOU APPROACH ME IN WHAT YOU NO DOUBT THINK IS A THREATENING MANNER, SO I WILL...WHAT? COWER IN YOUR PRESENCE?
COME ON! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, HMM?
WATCH ME.

FWAZAAAAK
HAH!!!
SO LET'S SEE WHAT THIS SWORD CAN DO--
--FIRSTHAND!

HE GOT HIM.
...
HEH.
HEH HEH.
HAAAHAAAAHHHHHAAAA!!!
YEAH, Y'THINK IT'S FUNNY, WE GET IT.
I FEEL NO PAIN!
NOW THAT I'M FULLY POWERED, NOT EVEN THIS BLADE CAN STOP ME!
WA
NOT THAT BLADE...
...AND NOT ANY OF YOU!
Ah, I think I get it.

IMAGINE! EVEN MY ALMIGHTY LORD FEARED THIS BLADE.
BUT HE'LL SEE. ONCE I BRING THIS BLADE TO HIS PRISON AND USE IT TO FREE HIM!
THEN NONE OF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO QUESTION THE POWER OF GOD!
CAN I ASK HIM IF HE CAN MAKE A ROCK TOO HEAVY FOR HIMSELF TO LIFT?
YOU'LL NEVER LEARN, WILL YOU?
NEVER STOP JOKING.
EXCEPT WHEN YOU STOP BREATHING.
YOU WILL PAY FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSION!
OH, NOW WHAT?!

YOU SEEM CONFUSED, DARK MAN.
ALLOW ME...
...TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON THE SUBJECT!
NOOOO!!

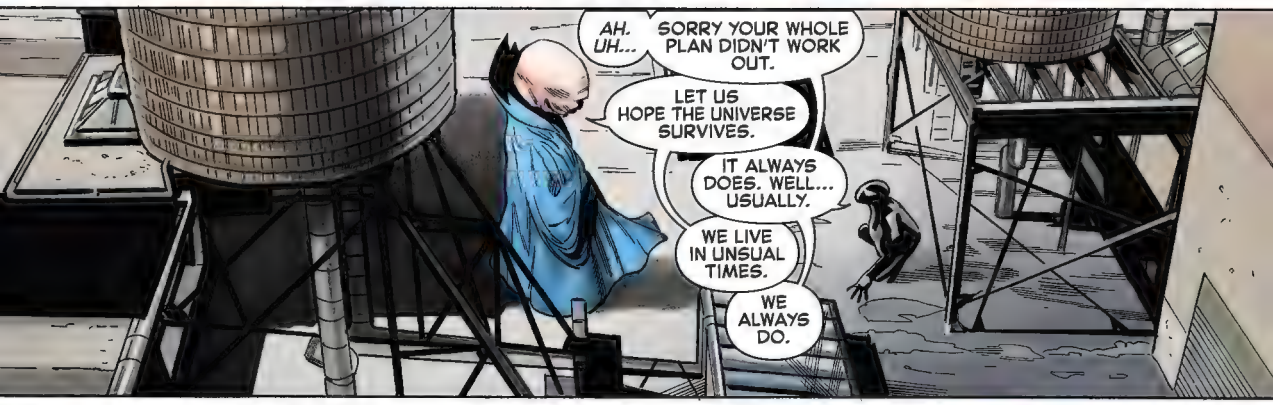
YOU...WON'T WIN. YOU CAN'T...!
YES...
...WE WILL.

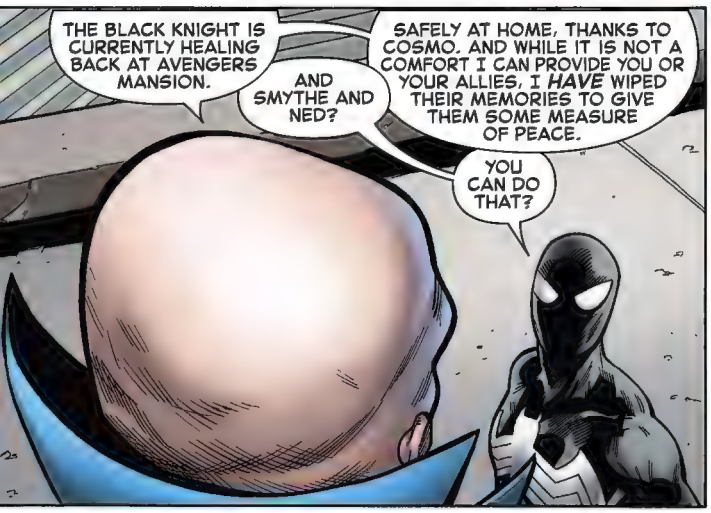
WHOA.
WHO'S THE MARV?
DANG STRAIGHT.
ME.
GMA
THE MISSION IS ONLY JUST NOW BEGINNING.
WHERE'RE WE GOING?
TO THE FUTURE.
COME AGAIN?
I AM INFORMING MY FUTURE SELF THAT I AM GOING TO HIS TIME TO FIGHT THE BATTLE I FORESAW IN KANG'S FUTURE CHRONICLES.
GLAD TO BE OF HELP.
...AFTER HE KIDNAPPED ME AND VIOLENTLY ATTEMPTED TO DRAIN MY MIND.
IT...SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.

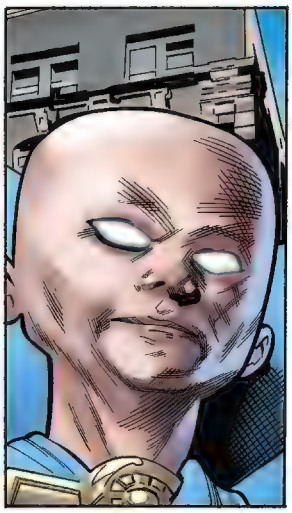
BRACE YOURSELF, CHILD. THE EFFECT CAN BE... DISCONCERTING.
I WAS EXPECTING SOME KINDA "BACK TO THE FUTURE" SPECIAL EFFECT, Y'KNOW?
UH...NO, I'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.
IT'S A...NEVER MIND.
PROBLEM?
I...I JUST ASSUMED I...
THAT YOU'D WHAT?
THE OTHERS OF MY RACE ARE PREVENTING ME FROM TIME TRAVEL, VALUING OUR CREDO ABOVE EVEN THE UNIVERSE'S SURVIVAL. FOOLS. BLIND FOOLS.
I...I'M SO SORRY...
SO MUCH FOR MY PLAN.
RACCOON, READY YOUR VESSEL. THERE IS ONE THING WE CAN ATTEND TO.
WE NEED TO ATTEND TO EARTH'S SUN, AT LEAST.

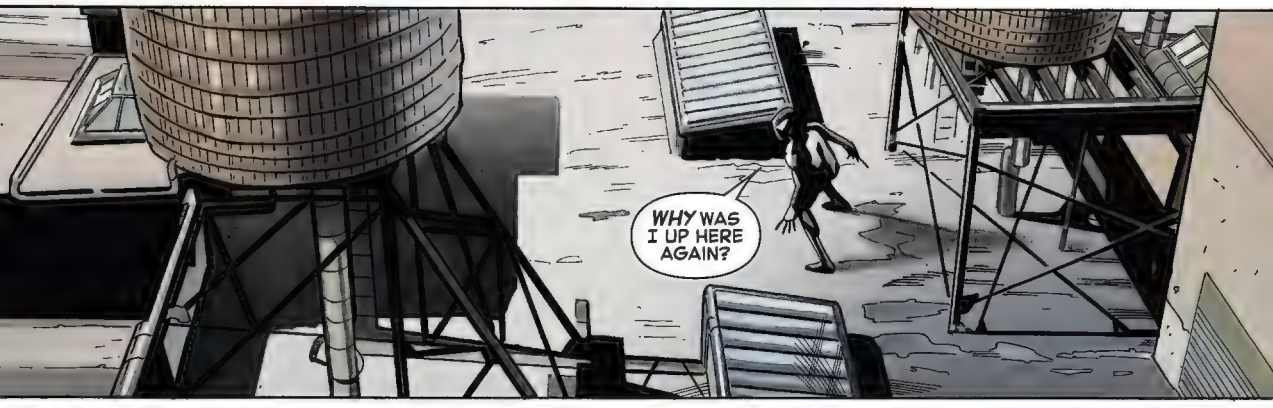
KNULL... WHATEVER AND WHEREVER YOU ARE...I HOPE YOU FEEL THIS, YOU CREEP!
SHE DID IT!
YER FLERKIN' RIGHT SHE DID!

ARRRRHHH!!
SOMETHING DARES HURT ME...
WHEN I ESCAPE THIS PRISON, WHOEVER--WHATEVER--DID THAT...
...WILL LIVE TO REGRET IT.
BUT NOT FOR VERY LONG.









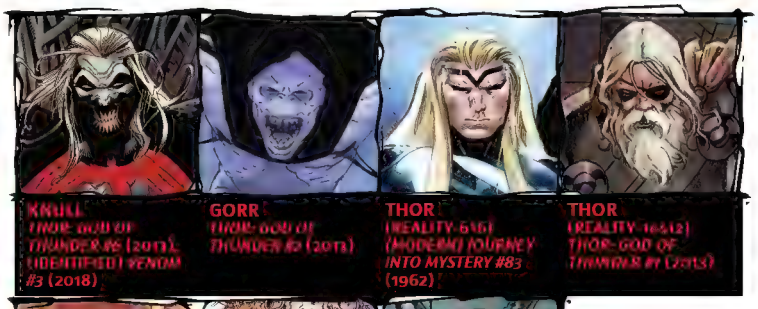
"I WONDER WHAT *FELICIA* IS UP TO TONIGHT..."

KING IN BLACK HANDBOOK

NOTE: COVERAGE FOR THIS HANDBOOK ENDS AT THE CONCLUSIONS OF *VENOM #30* AND *SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1*.

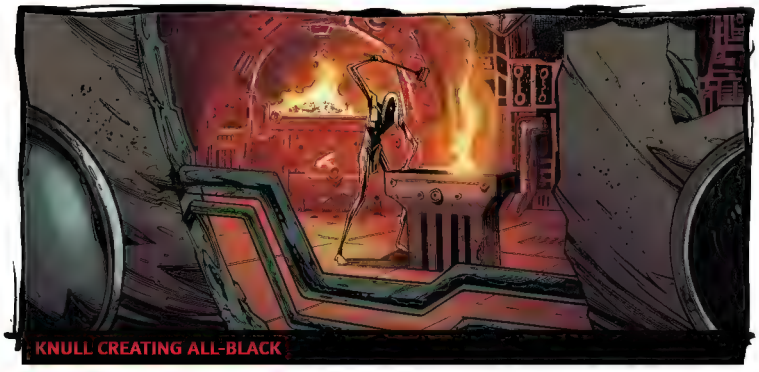
ALL-BLACK

CREATOR: Knull
USERS: Formerly Loki, Ego, Galactus, Thor Odinson (all native to Reality-14412), Thor Odinson, Gorr, Knull (all native to the Reality-616/ the Prime Reality)
ALIASES: Necrosword, Planet Cleaver, Slicer of Worlds, Annihilablade, Godslayer



HISTORY: The god Knull apparently came into being before the Big Bang and existed peacefully within darkness. When the cosmic Celestials' introduction of light and creation disturbed his experience of nothingness, Knull created the first precursor of the Symbiote race, with which he slew one of the Celestials in anger. He then forged the symbiote into a powerful sword, the All-Black, using fires within the fallen Celestial. Over time, various false tales of the weapon's origin were told, including that it was forged by unrevealed "Elder Gods," or that it was a manifestation of the darkness present in all gods. Approximately 3,000 years ago, Knull and an unidentified god crashed on a planet while doing battle. This planet was home to Gorr, whose wife, Arra, and son, Agar, died of famine despite their devotion to their gods. Gorr's hatred for the deities he blamed for his life's tragedies attracted the All-Black, which left Knull and bonded with Gorr. Believing all gods either caused destruction or did nothing and thus deserved death, Gorr became the God Butcher and began slaughtering gods throughout the universe. In 893 C.E., Gorr encountered the Asgardian god Thor Odinson and tortured him to learn the names and locations of all of Earth's gods. However, Thor ultimately defeated Gorr and believed him dead.

Over the subsequent centuries, Gorr wielded All-Black across the cosmos, leaving a trail of slain deities. At some point, Gorr forced Shadrak, a god of bombs and fireballs, to design a "Godbomb" that could destroy all gods through time and space; Gorr also used the All-Black to create avatars of his deceased family. Following the centuries-old trail of murdered gods, Thor eventually journeyed to the future of Reality-14412, where he learned Gorr had used the All-Black to enslave gods from throughout history, including the Thor of 893 C.E., and forced them to build the Godbomb, which would be partially powered by the All-Black. Though Thor could not prevent the Godbomb's detonation, he used his hammer, Mjolnir, and its Reality-14412 counterpart to absorb the blast and the All-Black, severing Gorr's control of the symbiote. Gorr watched the avatar



KNULL CREATING ALL-BLACK

IN NATURAL FORM

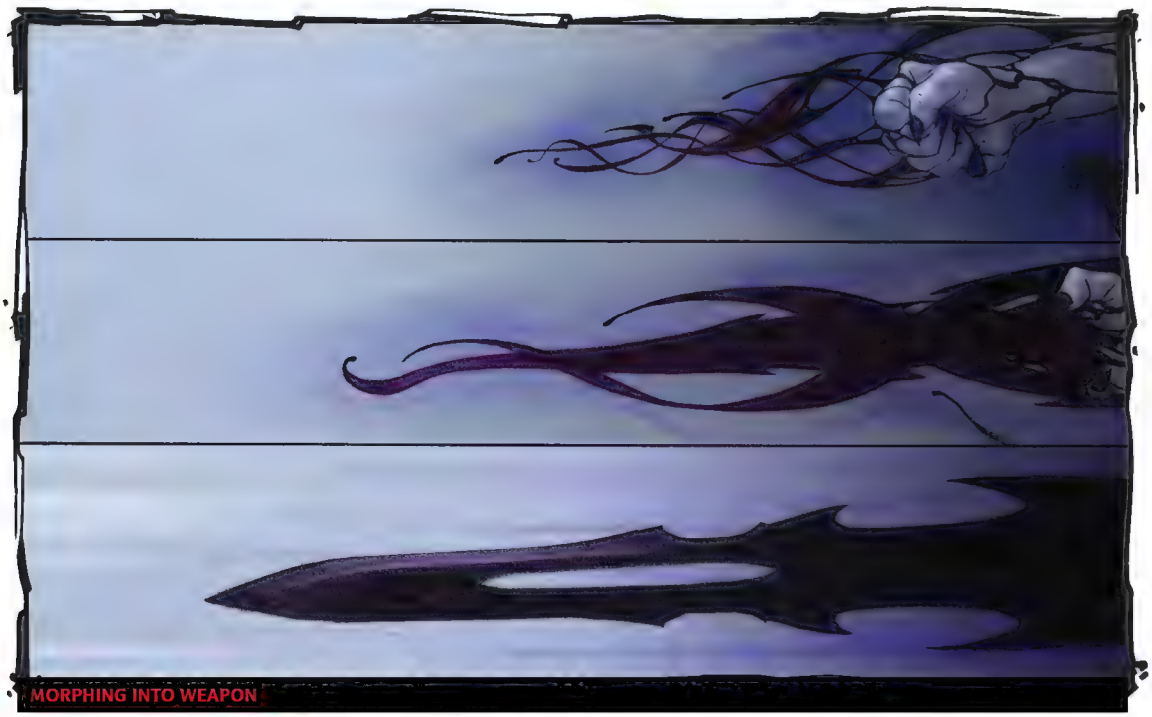
of his son melt away shortly before being decapitated by the young Thor of 893 C.E. The All-Black secretly absorbed Gorr into itself before Thor of Reality-14412 threw it into a black hole.

Sometime after the time-traveling Thors departed this reality, the world-devouring Galactus became a threat, forcing Thor of Reality-14412 to retrieve the All-Black from the black hole and use it to defeat Galactus. The All-Black, believed destroyed by the assault, bonded with Galactus who, under its influence, ran rampant through the cosmos devouring worlds before being confronted by Ego the Living Planet. During the battle, the symbiote abandoned Galactus to bond with Ego. Seeking the All-Black's power, the Asgardian god Loki tricked Ego into destroying itself so he could claim the symbiote. When Loki tried to release Gorr from the All-Black during a plot to destroy Thor, Gorr was angered that his peaceful, godless existence within All-Black was disturbed, but he resumed his quest to kill all gods when Loki returned the All-Black blade to him. When confronted by a legion of gods, Gorr bonded fully with the All-Black and began encompassing all space with darkness. Thor of Reality-14412 drew reserves of power from untold eons to unleash a thunderbolt that overpowered the All-Black, ending Gorr's darkness.

ATTRIBUTES: The All-Black is a vastly powerful, amorphous symbiote that attaches to an organic host and corrupts it. Though apparently sentient, the symbiote has not been documented acting independently of or speaking to its host like modern symbiotes. It generally takes the form of black-bladed weapons, though it can also project tendrils to attack or manipulate objects, or can be shaped into other objects such as a whip. It can also generate semi-sentient creatures such as Gorr's "Black Berserker" minions or avatars of sentient beings. When completely covered by the All-Black, a host can survive the vacuum of space, live for millennia without aging, and fly at interstellar speeds. When greatly enhanced by the blood of gods, the All-Black can possess cosmic beings such as Galactus or Ego the Living Planet, and at its most powerful, it can engulf celestial bodies and potentially the entire universe.

FIRST APPEARANCE: (Black Berserker) *Thor: God of Thunder #1* (2012); (as sword) *Thor: God of Thunder #2* (2013)

ART BY BUTCH GUICE, ESAD RIBIC & RYAN STEGMAN

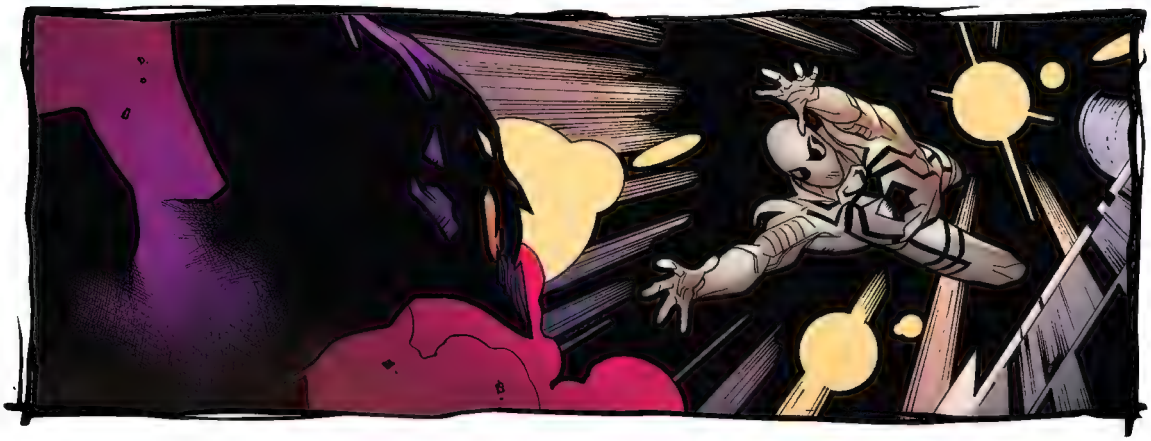


MORPHING INTO WEAPON

ANTI-VENOM

REAL NAME: Eugene "Flash" Thompson
ALIASES: Agent Anti-Venom, "Agent A-V," "Flesh Thom-Sen," Agent of the Cosmos, Victor Edward, Hail Mary, Gene Heisman, Venom, Agent Venom, "Flash-Man," "Sonny Boy"; has impersonated Stilt-Man, Hobgoblin, Spider-Man
IDENTITY: Known to authorities
OCCUPATION: Former assistant coach, adventurer, black ops agent, corporal in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserves, special advisor to the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs, Oscorp employee, college football player
CITIZENSHIP: USA, with a criminal record (pardoned)
PLACE OF BIRTH: Forest Hills, Queens, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: Harrison "Harry" (father, deceased), Rose "Rosie" (mother), Jessica "Jessie" (sister), unidentified brother-in-law (deceased), Lea (aunt)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Formerly U.S. Army Reserves, Alcoholics Anonymous, Agents of the Cosmos, Guardians of the Galaxy (Reality-616), Avengers, Thunderbolts (Red Hulk-led), Oscorp staff, U.S. Army, Spider-Man Fan Club
EDUCATION: Some college courses, military training
HEIGHT: 4'1" (formerly 6'2"); (Venom) Variable; (Anti-Venom) 6'3"
WEIGHT: 160 lbs. (formerly 185 lbs.); (Venom) Variable; (Anti-Venom) 195 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Reddish blond

HISTORY: Eugene "Flash" Thompson was a popular athlete growing up in Forest Hills, New York. However, suffering imposed on him by an abusive, alcoholic father and a codependent mother turned Thompson into a bully, especially toward the studious Peter Parker. Unaware "Puny" Parker was secretly Spider-Man, Thompson ironically considered himself the biggest fan of the super hero. Thompson matured through his college years and later in the Army, eventually coming to consider Parker one of his closest friends. After returning home from service, Thompson began dating Parker's friend Betty Brant off-



and-on, but during difficult times, Thompson turned to alcohol like his father. When his drinking led to legal and personal problems, Thompson eventually chose sobriety and joined Alcoholics Anonymous to get help.

An Army reservist, Thompson was later called to serve in a war in the Middle East, but he lost both legs performing a heroic rescue. After receiving the Medal of Honor, he returned to New York, reunited with Brant, and learned to walk with prosthetics. Eventually, Thompson volunteered for Project: Rebirth 2.0 under the leadership of General Bradley Dodge and monitored by Captain Katherine Glover, and became a special operative bonded to the oft-violent alien Venom symbiote. Thompson was given drugs to control the symbiote and the project maintained a "kill-switch" if Venom went rogue. Thompson was unaware that he also became host to a clone of the Venom symbiote that the would-be world-conquering Ararat Corporation had created that was previously absorbed by the Venom symbiote. As "Agent Venom" he fell into a fierce animosity with a criminal using the Jack O'Lantern identity, one who was directed by his father figure, Crime-Master (Brant's believed-dead brother, Bennett). Though finally able to act heroically like Spider-Man, Thompson's personal life began to crumble when he was unable to make believable excuses for his absences. Additionally, Crime-Master learned Thompson's secret identity, threatened his loved ones, and forced Agent Venom into a secret alliance in order to protect Thompson's family. Despite some victories, such as playing a pivotal role ending New York's "Spider-Island" event, Agent Venom was unable to free himself from Crime-Master's threats and manipulations and wrestled to rein in the symbiote's homicidal tendencies. As the monstrous Venom he savagely beat and decapitated reckless murderer the Hijacker (Howard Mitchell).

Struggling emotionally after his father's death and ignoring demands made by Captain America (Steve Rogers) to surrender the symbiote when he and the U.S. government sought to shut down Project: Rebirth 2.0, Thompson fled to Las Vegas. There, Crime-Master blackmailed Thompson into stealing the Toxin symbiote, which Crime-Master hoped to sell as a weapon; apparently both men were unaware they stole the Toxin symbiote from the demon-lord Blackheart. While he was on the run, Thompson broke up with Brant. When Blackheart prepared a ritual to bring Hell on Earth, Agent Venom, X-23 (Laura Kinney), Red Hulk ("Thunderbolt" Ross), and Ghost Rider (Alejandra Jones) joined forces to thwart Blackheart. After they were killed by Blackheart and his forces, this group made a deal with rival Hell-lord Mephisto to restore their lives in exchange for a future favor from the collective group. When resurrecting them, Mephisto marked each of them with Hell-Marks, intending to secretly put them each in the running to be his successor as a Hell-lord; however, Thompson's Hell-Mark was unknowingly affixed to the previously absorbed Ararat Corporation clone. After the group foiled Blackheart's scheme, Captain America pardoned Thompson for

going AWOL and offered Avengers membership. Thompson joined, and Beast (Henry McCoy) and Hank Pym provided him with a serum to render the symbiote docile. As a rookie Avenger, Agent Venom helped battle Adaptoids led by the synthezoid Descendants and rescued his fellow Avenger Valkyrie (Brunnhilde) from them. When symbiote-wearing serial killer Carnage (Cletus Kasady) escaped captivity and took over a small Colorado town, Agent Venom returned Carnage to prison. Later, Agent Venom attempted to snipe Crime-Master, but Eddie Brock (the Venom symbiote's previous host) interfered when he tried to kill Agent Venom during his quest to eliminate all symbiotes. After Agent Venom fled, Crime-Master forced the Toxin symbiote to bond to Brock; as Toxin, Brock joined Crime-Master's Savage Six alongside Megatak (Gregory Nettles), Jack O'Lantern, Death Adder (Roland Burroughs), Human Fly (Richard Deacon), and Crime-Master himself.

In retaliation for Thompson breaking his pact with Crime-Master, the Savage Six kidnapped his family and Betty Brant. Agent Venom rescued Betty as well as his mother and sister Jessie, but Jessie's husband was killed. Following this, Thompson finally revealed his identity to Betty, leaving her scared and angry. Crime-Master later captured Betty and revealed to her he was her brother. When Crime-Master overpowered Agent Venom, Betty shot Bennett in the back, apparently killing him. Jack O'Lantern, bitter at losing his father figure, went on a rampage, but was captured by Agent Venom and placed into Avengers custody. Later still, when Valkyrie was initiating a romantic relationship with Thompson, the Descendants infiltrated the Avengers orbiting Lighthouse Station thanks to Black Ant (secretly a duplicitous Life-Model Decoy of the apparently deceased Avenger Ant-Man/Eric O'Grady) and destroyed it. Agent Venom rescued Valkyrie and stopped Black Ant while the Descendants' "grandfather" Jim Hammond (formerly the Human Torch) deactivated all the Descendants before they transformed humanity into cyborgs.

While investigating Hydra's Department of Occult Armaments (D.O.A.), Agent Venom discovered rituals causing demonic possession of D.O.A. members. During the investigation, he also learned he had authority over demons, unaware the Hell-Mark affixed to the clone symbiote within the Venom symbiote actually granted this authority. When Agent Venom confronted D.O.A. member Daimon Hellstrom, who had previously cast a demon into Agent Venom, Hellstrom summoned the gargantuan Monsters of Evil against him, but Agent Venom redirected the Monsters against Hellstrom. Imprisoned, presumably for crimes committed by the D.O.A., Hellstrom explained to Thompson that Mephisto's Hell-Mark granted authority within occult matters and put him in the running to be Mephisto's successor; both apparently remained unaware the

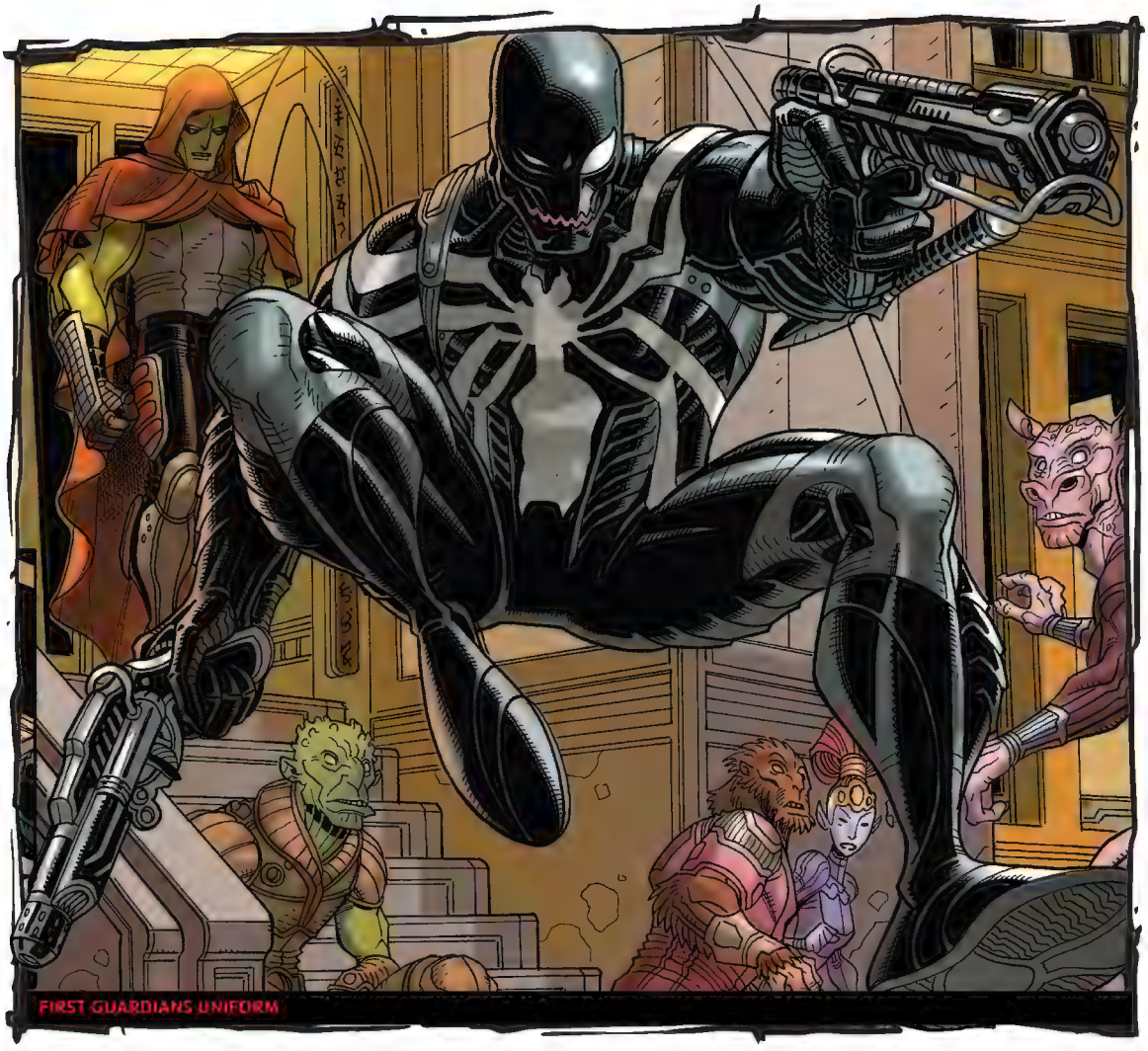
Hell-Mark's "gifts" were actually bequeathed to the clone symbiote. Agent Venom next traveled with the Scarlet Spider (Spider-Man's clone Kaine) and reporter Katy Kiernan into the extradimensional Microverse in pursuit of the once-again-free Carnage, who accepted a deal with the despotic Marquis Radu to assassinate his enemy, the Redeemer. Assisting the heroic Enigma Force team, Agent Venom protected the Microverse and followed Carnage back to Earth, where Scarlet Spider essentially lobotomized Kasady.

Seeking a fresh start, Thompson took a position in Philadelphia as an assistant gym coach at West Philadelphia High School by day and acting as city guardian by night. There, he met student Andrea "Andi" Benton, who also lived in his apartment building. During a battle with the U-Foes, Agent Venom procured a machine that could uncover memories. Around this time, Red Hulk tapped Agent Venom to join his Thunderbolts black ops squad, along with the Punisher (Frank Castle), Elektra Natchios, and Deadpool ("Wade Wilson"). The Thunderbolts staged a violent coup d'état against the dictator of the island nation of Kata Jaya, where the gamma-powered Madman (Phillip Sterns) was providing black market gamma-technology to empower retired Crimson Dynamo armor for Elektra's brother Orestez. Despite much mistrust within their ranks, the Thunderbolts succeeded, and Orestez was apparently killed. Returning to Philadelphia, Agent Venom was hunted by Toxin and also faced alien technology that turned people into cannibalistic cyborgs; the two ultimately partnered to stop the cyborgs. Meanwhile, Benton deduced Thompson was a super hero. After Agent Venom interfered with his "business endeavors," the elusive drug lord and human trafficker Lord Ogre sent a man hypnotized into becoming Jack O'Lantern (while the real Jack O'Lantern was imprisoned) to Thompson's apartment building where he attacked Benton and apparently killed her father. The Ararat Corporation clone within Venom separated and bonded to the vengeance-seeking Benton for unrevealed reasons, surprising Thompson. Agent Venom stopped Benton from killing Jack O'Lantern, whom they left in police custody. Benton moved away, adopted the name Mania, and began hunting Lord Ogre.

THUNDERBOLTS UNIFORM

Through information provided by an incarcerated Hellstrom and the U-Foes' memory device, Thompson learned that the symbiote transferred not only the Ararat clone to Benton but his Hell-Mark as well, which both increased her inner aggression and gave her the ability to command Hellfire and demons. Agent Venom and Mania fended off two attempts by the D.O.A. to hunt her for the Hell-Mark, one of which resulted in D.O.A.'s demons killing Lord Ogre; Thompson vowed to free Benton of her burgeoning demonic corruption. Thompson eventually quit the Thunderbolts, concerned that the lethal methods employed by the group were beginning to appeal to the violent nature of his symbiote. While investigating someone assuming the Crime-Master persona, Thompson was captured by Spider-Man (secretly Doctor Octopus/Otto Octavius possessing Peter Parker's body) and separated from the symbiote by Octavius, who believed he was doing Thompson a favor. However, the symbiote bonded to "Spider-Man" and rampaged through the city. Through these events, Thompson learned Project: Rebirth's drugs had made him dependent on the symbiote and that hours of separation would kill him; he regained the symbiote with the Avengers' assistance.

Agent Venom accepted an assignment from Iron Man (Tony Stark) to join the star-faring Guardians of the Galaxy. Though he served the Guardians honorably and was delighted at life in space, Agent Venom was frequently targeted by Skrull militants wanting the symbiote. Additionally, attempts by other symbiotes to mentally summon the Venom symbiote inadvertently triggered its mental instability. The symbiote eventually hijacked the Guardians' spacecraft and traveled



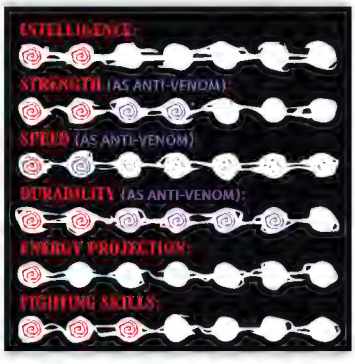
to the symbiote planet, Klyntar, where apparently benevolent symbiotes there purified the Venom symbiote's imbalances and stabilized its bond with Thompson. These symbiotes inducted the duo into the Agents of the Cosmos, a group apparently dedicated to helping those in need throughout the universe; Agent Venom subsequently began answering calls for assistance both with the Guardians and as an Agent of the Cosmos. Eventually, he amassed a second crew of allies, including the service robot 803, the Wugin queen Iqa, the Ruu'lto Pik Rollo, and Rollo's daughter Hilla, all of whom, in one way or another, suffered because of the Gramosian warlord Mercurio. Agent Venom also encountered two other symbiote-bonded Agents of the Cosmos, Myntril and the Skrull Tarna, who were assigned to evaluate Thompson's performance. Though the purified symbiote was able to separate from him and move and speak autonomously for short periods, it began to descend into moments of rage caused by sympathetically experiencing Benton's demonic corruption. The Klyntar symbiotes healed Venom once again and then told Thompson of an elixir on the planet Wenb that could stave off Benton's corruption. Thompson's allies offered to obtain the elixir, urging him to return to Earth. Coincidentally, Agent Venom and the Guardians were summoned to Earth by former Guardian Captain Marvel (Carol Danvers) to help her deal with a schism among Earth's superhumans, enabling Thompson to seek out Benton, now nearly fully corrupted by her Hell-Mark. With the aid of the true Spider-Man (who had regained control of his body from Octavius) and his second group of allies (who had brought the elixir to Earth), Agent Venom healed Benton and her symbiote and decided to remain on Earth.

Agent Venom and Mania's renewed partnership was cut short when FBI Agent Wambaugh forcibly separated Thompson from his symbiote with sonic weaponry, attempting to capture it for the U.S. government. Thompson searched for the symbiote for weeks, unaware that it had briefly bonded with criminal ex-soldier Lee Price before ultimately reuniting with Brock. Thompson confronted Brock at the offices of Liz Allan's company Alchemax demanding the symbiote, but Spider-Man, misjudging the situation and seeking to end hostilities, doused them both in an Alchemax-made Anti-Venom serum. The serum somehow merged with Thompson and took the shape of armor that resembled a photo-negative version of his Agent Venom appearance. The armor afforded him superhuman powers again, including healing abilities, but rendered his touch toxic to symbiotes. Later, Price, who had assaulted Benton and stolen her

symbiote, took the name Maniac and planned to take control of New York's underworld, putting him at odds with Thompson and Spider-Man. Learning the Anti-Venom serum was just as toxic to Maniac's symbiote and could free anyone under its control, Thompson and Spider-Man, aided by Brock, Black Cat (Felicia Hardy), and a still-demonically powered Benton, battled and defeated Price. Appreciative of Brock's help, Thompson assented to the symbiote remaining with its former host.

Learning of Thompson's empowering through Alchemax security footage, Liz Allan recruited Thompson, who had resumed costumed heroics as Agent Anti-Venom, to help safeguard an offsite research project involving the highly destructive isotope tritium. Even with Spider-Man's aid, Thompson failed to prevent the Goblin King (Phil Urich) from stealing a tritium sample from the site, presumably to use as a weapon. At Allan's insistence, Thompson searched for the missing tritium and tracked it to Urich's hideout, finding Urich's mutilated corpse and learning that insane industrialist Norman Osborn (formerly the Green Goblin) had bonded with the Carnage symbiote, which he had stolen from the subaquatic Lock Box facility. Injured in battle with Osborn and aware his family and friends had been targeted by his foe, Spider-Man enlisted Agent Anti-Venom, the Human Torch (Johnny Storm), Clash (Clayton Cole), Silk (Cindy Moon), and neophyte Spider-Man Miles Morales to watch over his loved ones, but all five were brutally defeated in battle against Osborn. Thompson depleted much of the Anti-Venom stabilizing the other heroes and healing Spider-Man's injury. He then accompanied them to a hospital where he overheard Silk refer to Spider-Man by his real name and noticed Osborn had implanted fragments of Carnage within them as a means of remotely killing them. Agent Anti-Venom purged the Carnage fragments from the heroes and Spider-Man's loved ones, then rejoined Spider-Man as he battled Osborn, confiding his knowledge of Spider-Man's identity. With little Anti-Venom remaining to marshal a defense, Thompson was fatally electrocuted by Osborn. Thompson's dying words were to urge Spider-Man to stop Osborn, and to express his appreciation for his hero and friend. Some time later, the Maker (Reality-1610's Reed Richards) revealed to Venom that he had a sample of Thompson's blood taken by Project: PEGASUS prior to Thompson becoming Anti-Venom, one that apparently contained his symbiote's codex (the genetic imprint left in hosts by symbiotes). After absorbing this sample to prevent the Maker from having it, Venom could interact with Thompson's personality within the codex, but this aspect apparently "burnt out" after a time. If the Maker followed through with his stated plans of exhuming Thompson's corpse to perform additional symbiote research remains unrevealed.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: As Anti-Venom, the biochemical serum bonded to Flash Thompson could form armor granting him a portion of the abilities he possessed as Agent Venom, including enhanced strength (presumably lifting up to 11 tons) and agility, protection from physical injury, surface adhesion, and the ability to project its substance as either webbing, tendrils, or offensive talons. Thompson could use the serum to rapidly heal physical wounds and illnesses in himself and others by neutralizing bodily impurities, up to and including reattaching severed limbs, though these healing abilities caused pain to symbiotes due to their alien biology. Excessive use of his healing ability would cause the Anti-Venom suit to lose structural integrity. As Agent Venom, he had all the powers of a symbiote-bonded human (very similar to his Anti-Venom powers, minus the healing attributes). Thompson often carried conventional firearms, with which he was proficient, and supplemented his arsenal with alien-made weaponry during his travels in space. After the Klyntar symbiotes purified the Venom symbiote, it could independently separate from Thompson for approximately an hour and could verbally speak while separated. A natural all-around athlete, Thompson kept himself in excellent physical condition even after the loss of his legs, and became adept in various wheelchair sports. He was a capable unarmed combatant thanks to his boxing background and his military experience.



FIRST APPEARANCE: (Thompson) *Amazing Fantasy #15* (1962); (Venom) *Amazing Spider-Man #654* (2011); (Anti-Venom) *Amazing Spider-Man: Venom Inc. Alpha #1* (2018)

ART BY NICK BRADSHAW, STEFANO CASELLI, STUART IMMONEN, HUMBERTO RAMOS, VALERIO SCHITI, RYAN STEGMAN & BILLY TAN

BIG MOTHER

REAL NAME: Unrevealed
ALIASES: Mother of all Dead Things, "Bane of Beowulf," "Grendel's Mother," "Hell-bride," "Hell-dam," "Mother of the Monster," "Tarn-hag"
IDENTITY: Secret
OCCUPATION: Servitor of Knull, possible Hell-lord; former professional wrestler, marauder
CITIZENSHIP: Unrevealed
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unrevealed region of space
KNOWN RELATIVES: Grendel (supposed offspring); Knull (creator)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Formerly Federation of Women's Wrestling
EDUCATION: Unrevealed
HEIGHT: Variable
WEIGHT: Variable
EYES: Solid yellow
TENTACLES: Light maroon

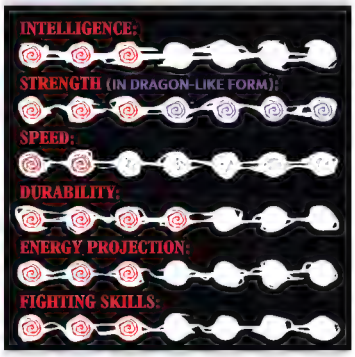
HISTORY: Billions of years ago, while creating an army, ancient deity Knull created the precursors of the Symbiote race and used them to terrorize the universe. Two that resembled giant dragons (who would become known as Big Mother and Grendel) found Earth in the sixth century. When Grendel attacked a Scandinavian settlement, he was defeated by the Asgardian god Thor Odinson and became frozen in ice; retellings of this battle are believed to be the basis of the epic poem *Beowulf*. At some point in the subsequent centuries, through unrevealed circumstances, Big Mother became trapped in a magical prison until the wizard Merlin Demonspawn (formerly the Maha Yogi) freed her in modern times in hopes she could lead him to the Holy Grail. Angered at being treated as a lackey, Big Mother refused to cooperate, instead venturing into modern Los Angeles where talent agent Mordecai P. Boggs "discovered" her and entered her into the Federation of Women's Wrestling. At some point, Big Mother took up residence in a sunken shipwreck in the Upper New York Bay. After learning of her fellow symbiote Scream (Andi Benton), Big Mother became obsessed with parenting her and sent her pseudo-symbiote minions to capture her. After failing to lure Benton by impersonating her mother, the pseudo-symbiotes publicly attacked her, though Scream fought them off. During a later direct confrontation between the two, Scream hanged Big Mother from a construction crane until Big Mother's weight forced her body to split from her head; despite this, Scream surmised Big Mother was not permanently dead. The FBI took custody of Big Mother's remains.

DRAGON-LIKE FORM, BATTLING THOR

CREATION OF BIG MOTHER AND GRENDEL

NOTES: *A being resembling Big Mother appeared to attend a meeting of Hell-lords in Hell; whether this was actually Big Mother is unrevealed. Though created at the same time, Big Mother is largely accepted as Grendel's mother. Considering Knull's creations' vulnerability to fire, depictions of Big Mother and Grendel breathing fire remain unexplained.*

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES (ABRIDGED): Big Mother was a shapechanger whose known forms included a winged dragon and a humanlike form, and ranged from 10'-35'. She was a sorceress whose full abilities were unrevealed, and a skilled hand-to-hand combatant, but she generally relied more on greater size and strength in fights. She could create symbiote servitors of her own, though they were "watered down" versions that were typically bonded to deceased hosts. She carefully guarded her true name to prevent it being used to summon her and bind her in servitude.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Captain Marvel #20* (2001)

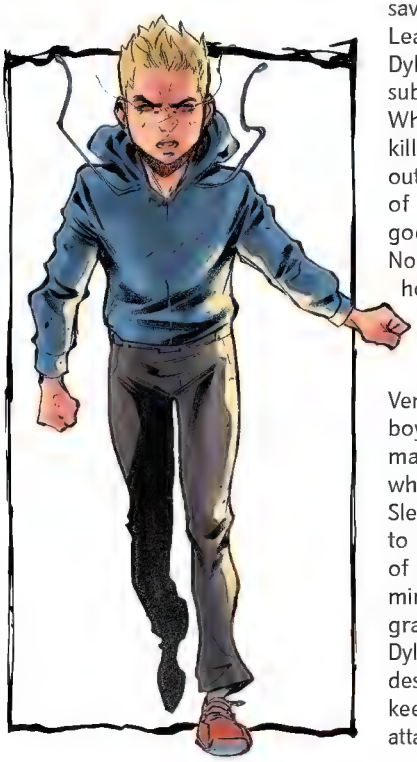
ART BY CHRIS MOONEYHAM

DYLAN BROCK

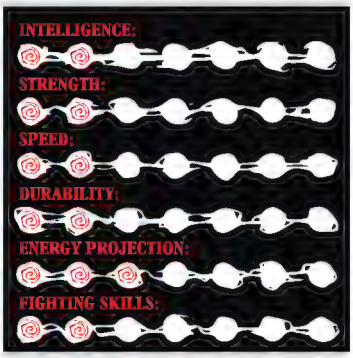
REAL NAME: Dylan Brock
ALIASES: None
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Student
CITIZENSHIP: USA
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unrevealed
KNOWN RELATIVES: Eddie Brock (alleged father), Anne Weying (mother, deceased), Venom (alleged partial genetic contributor), Carl Brock (supposed grandfather), Jamie Brock (supposed grandmother, deceased), Martha Brock (supposed great aunt, deceased), various relations through Venom symbiote
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
EDUCATION: Elementary school student
HEIGHT: 4'8"
WEIGHT: 76 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Blond

SYMBIOTE CONTROLLING POWERS

HISTORY: At some point, longtime Venom symbiote host Eddie Brock and former host Anne Weying (Brock's ex-wife) apparently conceived a child, though Weying has alluded to no traditional conception occurring. The fetus apparently received genetic material from the symbiote, including Anne's symbiote-codex, a genetic imprint left in all symbiote hosts. Unable to care for the baby, which she named Dylan, Anne left him with his paternal grandfather, Carl Brock, and soon after committed suicide; growing up, Dylan believed Carl was his father. Years later, Dylan met Eddie, believing him to be his half brother, and asked him to save him from his abusive "father." Learning from his symbiote that Dylan was allegedly his son, Eddie subsequently took Dylan from Carl. When symbiote-wearing serial killer Carnage (Cletus Kasady) set out to acquire the symbiote-codex of all hosts to revive symbiote god Knull, Dylan and new friend Normie Osborn (a former symbiote host) stayed in the care of Eddie's ally Maker (Reed Richards of Earth-1610). When the Life Foundation symbiotes attacked, Venom's spawn Sleeper rescued the boys, following which Dylan began manifesting superhuman abilities when he forcibly took control of Sleeper; doing so allowed Sleeper to see an unrevealed true nature of Dylan. Shortly after, Carnage's minion Norman Osborn (Normie's grandfather) targeted the boys; Dylan used his abilities to apparently destroy Osborn's symbiote, secretly keeping a piece of it. Carnage soon attacked, eager to claim Dylan as the final codex needed to awaken Knull. Eddie chose to rescue Dylan by absorbing the Carnage symbiote, which resulted in Knull's revival. During this moment, Dylan learned Eddie was allegedly his father, changing the tenor of their relationship for a time; Dylan chose to keep his developing abilities, the piece of Osborn's symbiote, and his true nature secret. When Eddie later battled the Carnage symbiote on the Caribbean Isla de Huesos, Dylan used the portion of the Osborn symbiote to access the Klyntar hive mind and remote-pilot the Venom symbiote to aid Eddie. After Dylan contacted the Avengers to rescue his father, Eddie took him to see the Maker to learn more about his abilities. There, the villainous Virus (Mac Gargan) inadvertently transported Eddie and Dylan to an Earth (Reality-1051) ruled by Codex (that reality's Dylan Brock). After Codex's defeat, Eddie and Dylan had to wait over a year for completion of the technology to return them home.



ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Dylan can control symbiotes and remote-pilot them through the symbiote hive mind, and while doing so, he has levitated; the full scope and definition of his abilities are unrevealed. Dylan apparently cannot be used as a symbiote host and when he touches them, they burn and experience pain.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Venom* #7 (2018)

ART BY IBAN COELLO & RYAN STEGMAN

CARNAGE

REAL NAME: Cletus Kasady
ALIASES: Symbiote of Vengeance, the Red Slayer, the Red Messiah, Cleavon Kasady, Corrupter, Carnage Cosmic, Spider-Carnage, impersonated Eddie Brock
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Servitor of Knull, cult leader, professional criminal, serial killer
CITIZENSHIP: USA, with a criminal record
PLACE OF BIRTH: Allegedly Ravencroft Institute for the Criminally Insane, Roosevelt Island, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: (Kasady) unidentified mother (deceased), Roscoe (last name unrevealed, possible father or foster father, presumably deceased), Louise (last name unrevealed, possible stepmother or foster mother, deceased), "Nana" (supposed grandmother, presumably deceased), Cortland Kasady (ancestor); (original symbiote) Venom ("progenitor"), Agony, Lasher, Phage, Riot ("siblings," collectively known as Hybrid, apparently deceased), Scream, Sleeper ("siblings"), Dylan Brock (alleged "half brother"); (Negative Zone symbiote) Scorn, Toxin ("offspring"), Raze (possible "offspring"), other possible "offspring" used in Hall Industries' armors (including Burnt Orange, Firebrick, Gun Metal, Paris Green, and Royal Blue, all absorbed back into the symbiote); (Poison symbiote) none; (Grendel symbiote) none
GROUP AFFILIATION: Church of New Darkness, leader of the "Carnage family"; formerly the Frightful Four
EDUCATION: High school
HEIGHT: 4' (formerly 6'1"); variable (with increased mass)
WEIGHT: 165 lbs. (formerly 190 lbs.); variable (with increased mass)
EYES: Green
HAIR: Red

HISTORY: Much of what is known of Cletus Kasady's parentage and birth comes from secondhand sources or from Kasady's own recollections, which should be considered unreliable due to his fluid mental state. In modern times, a journal kept by Jonas Ravencroft, founder of the modern-day Ravencroft Institute for the Criminally Insane, detailed the incarceration of the murderer Cortland Kasady on the site of the future Ravencroft Institute two centuries before his apparent descendant Cletus. Cletus Kasady is believed to have been sired by an unidentified father and born to a paranoid schizophrenic mother after she was interred at the Ravencroft Institute. According to a cult leader named Scorn (Tanis Nieves), Kasady died shortly after birth due to an umbilical cord strangulation. Per her account, an adult Kasady testified to a court-appointed psychologist that he remembered going to Hell as an infant, and being trapped in "a cage of endless abyss" before being returned to life. Kasady's mother died shortly after childbirth, so the boy was apparently sent to live with "Nana," his supposed grandmother in Brooklyn, New York. A later psychic review of Kasady's mind revealed memories of Kasady possibly killing Nana by pushing her wheelchair down some stairs, then being sent to live with Roscoe and Louise, who were either foster parents or Kasady's actual father and stepmother. Sometime after the abusive Roscoe inadvertently killed Louise, Kasady was sent to the St. Estes Home for Boys. According to Scorn, Kasady's experiences in Hell helped him form a pre-teen devotion to freeing others from the "cage of life," leading him to burn down St. Estes, committing his first mass murder. Later, after being convicted of being a serial killer, the adult Kasady was sentenced to eleven consecutive life terms. While imprisoned, Kasady was beaten by cellmate Eddie Brock, who was imprisoned for crimes committed as Venom, a murderous human/alien symbiote hybrid. When the symbiote broke Brock out of prison, an offspring left behind by the creature merged with Kasady, granting him superhuman abilities. As the bloodthirsty Carnage, Kasady continued his serial mass murders, which brought him into repeated conflicts with Venom, Spider-Man (Peter Parker), and other superhuman protectors of Earth, but also connected him with fellow superhuman sociopaths, with whom Carnage formed a surrogate family. After Carnage repeatedly escaped incarceration from the Ravencroft Institute, his symbiote was forcibly absorbed by Venom, leaving Kasady powerless and in shock until he bonded with his second symbiote, one found in the Negative Zone. Eventually, during a superhuman breakout from Ryker's Island prison, the superhumanly strong Sentry (Robert Reynolds) took Carnage to outer space and tore him in two.

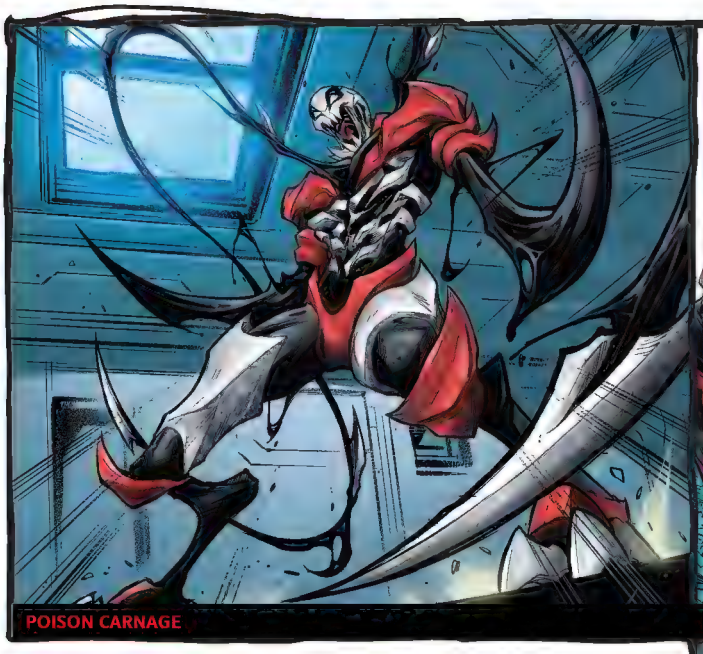
MICROVERSE HYBRID ARMY

WITH FRIGHTFUL FOUR

DARKHOLD-CORRUPTED

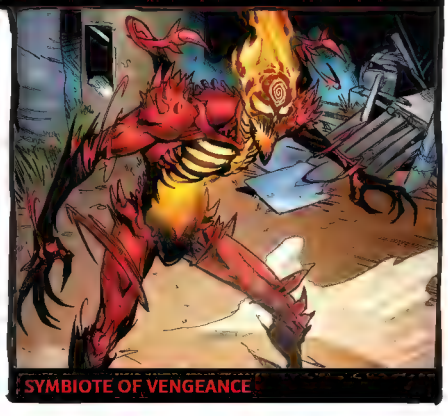
The symbiote nearly starved to death keeping Kasady alive until weapons manufacturer Hall Industries retrieved them over a year later. Hall harvested live tissue samples from the symbiote, developing prosthetics such as Kasady's new legs, symbiotic armor for Hall's security team, and psychiatrist Tanis Nieves' prosthetic arm. After Carnage escaped, he absorbed the security team's symbiotic armor and increased his mass to monstrous proportions. Nieves bonded with the symbiote in her prosthesis (Carnage's "daughter"), becoming Scorn, and forced her former patient Shriek (Frances Barrison) to use her sonic powers to separate Carnage from his extra mass. Carnage eventually fled to the small meat-packing community of Doverton, Colorado, declaring it the capital of a sovereign symbiotic state in his bid for world domination. Feeding on cattle to increase his mass again, Carnage enslaved nearly the entire town. The Avengers and a number of the U.S. Emergency Response Center's operatives: Scorn, four symbiote-enhanced soldiers dubbed Mercury Team created with symbiotes taken from the symbiote amalgamation Hybrid (Scott Washington), and Agent Venom (Eugene "Flash" Thompson) resisted Carnage. During the battle Kasady was separated from his symbiote, which caused his prosthetic legs to crumble. He was subsequently taken into custody, his symbiote captured by Scorn and secreted away, though remnants of the symbiote within Kasady's DNA apparently regenerated to a full symbiote. At some point Kasady apparently regained a lower body and legs through unrevealed means. Later, assassins from the Microverse dimension procured Carnage from Thunderbolts Mountain Maximum Security Prison for their master, Marquis Radu, to murder Microverse messiah, the Redeemer. Agent Venom and Scarlet Spider (Kaine) pursued them to the Microverse via the Prometheus Pit, a device for interdimensional teleportation. There, Marquis Radu captured Carnage and Agent Venom and cloned their symbiotes to create an army, which Carnage quickly took over and used to destroy Radu's mobile base, then returned to the Macroverse. Following him, Agent Venom defeated Carnage and his army of miniatures with a Microverse disruptor device. Scarlet Spider then lobotomized Kasady, oblivious this gave the symbiote full control. Not long after, the Wizard (formerly Bentley Wittman) sought to mentally enslave Carnage for his Frightful Four and freed him from an undisclosed containment facility, unaware Kasady's mind was catatonic and impervious to mind control. Wizard transferred the symbiote to the paraplegic, immoral scientist Dr. Karl Malus, enslaved his mind, and blew up the facility, leaving Kasady to be killed. Wizard soon lost control of Carnage due to injuries sustained in battle with Spider-Man (Otto Octavius possessing Peter Parker's body). Octavius eventually lured the symbiote away using Kasady, who had apparently survived but was badly burned. After Wizard's ally Ulysses Klaw used sonics to defeat Carnage, Octavius captured the symbiote and turned Kasady over to the authorities but secretly kept the symbiote; it was later determined Kasady's re-exposure to the symbiote healed his brain damage and apparently the burns.

Over the next few months, Octavius sent chemically neutered samples of the symbiote to independent facilities for study, but the symbiote's telepathic bond with Kasady remained strong. When Kasady was stabbed by a fellow inmate in the Kramer Penitentiary in Hague, New Jersey, overwhelming stress killed the symbiote, but a sample found at Morse Laboratories in



POISON CARNAGE

RESURRECTED WITH GRENDEL SYMBIOTE



SYMBIOTE OF VENGEANCE

Albuquerque, New Mexico, took various hosts on a cross-country journey to reunite with Kasady. Corrupt prison psychiatrist Dr. Jenner killed Kasady, hoping to bond with the symbiote, but it rejected Jenner and reclaimed Kasady's corpse, resurrecting him before going on a killing spree within the prison and escaping. A resulting nationwide manhunt proved fruitless, but the mentally unstable mercenary Deadpool ("Wade Wilson") believed he received signs to stop Carnage. Outside Tulsa, Oklahoma, Kasady had an epiphany that he needed a return to random bloodshed. Stumbling upon Mercury Team's top-secret military complex, Carnage slaughtered them, leaving their symbiotes to briefly bond with Deadpool. At Carrington Cottage Psychiatric Hospital, Deadpool convinced Carnage his actions were predictable, breaking his spirit, and Carnage surrendered. Later, not wanting to live in a world under the control of the psychically powered Red Skull (Johann Shmidt), Carnage joined Magneto (Max Eisenhardt) in opposing him and was exposed to an inversion spell that reversed his morality, prompting him to abduct respected news anchor Alice Gleason so she could provide him with heroic tutelage. A supernatural, guilt-devouring Sin-Eater targeted Gleason, but Carnage overloaded him with all his repressed guilt, pain, and wickedness. Carnage then smothered a gene bomb in Manhattan designed to kill all non-mutants, but survived the blast. Later, he and other inverted villains, as the "Axis of Evil," claimed responsibility for the villainous actions the inverted heroes committed, knowing it was the only way for the world to trust them again, promising to conceal the truth even after the heroes were returned to normal; at some point, Nova (Sam Alexander) innocently disclosed his civilian identity when meeting Carnage at Avengers Mansion. When the inversion spell was negated, Carnage threatened Nova's life in Carefree, Arizona, because he didn't want to be remembered as a hero, but he was defeated by the teen hero.

An "unofficial" task force, under FBI Agent Claire Dixon's supervision, lured Carnage to Grey Ridge Mine in West Virginia with the sole survivor of the St. Estes' Home for Boys slaughter, Manuela Calderon. Mine owner and secret *Darkhold* cultist Barry Gleason tried to sacrifice Carnage, which would fulfill the Red Slayer prophecy and raise the Elder God Chthon. Kasady's blood mixed with the *Darkhold*'s enchanted pages, allowing Carnage to command the cultists. Obsessed with the book, Carnage headed to the Temple of Chthon on an uncharted island in the Timor Sea to unlock its full potential. Carnage eventually awoke Chthon, expecting remuneration, but was harshly dismissed. Overcome by numerous enemies, Kasady was delivered to the FBI. Crazed businessman Norman Osborn (formerly Green Goblin) became the Red Goblin after he hired mercenaries to retrieve the Carnage symbiote from the maximum security Lock Box facility, deep in the Atlantic Ocean, but the symbiote was apparently destroyed battling Spider-Man (Peter Parker). It is unclear whether this was the symbiote captured by Scorn in Doverton, Colorado, or another taken from Kasady while in FBI custody.

Later, the Poisons, a species that harvests symbiotes and consumes their hosts, abducted Kasady from Ravencroft and forced him to bond with a new symbiote linked to the Poison hive mind, forcing the symbiote already intertwined with his DNA into dormancy. Carnage was stranded in space following

the Poison Queen's defeat and was eventually drawn into Earth's orbit, where the Poison symbiote broke off. The symbiote remaining in his DNA allowed Kasady to survive reentry, but Kasady was so badly burned his legs were destroyed and he died shortly after landing; it is unclear if the symbiote survived. Kasady's body was taken by Knull cultists led by Scorn, possibly under Knull's influence. The cultists used a portion of Knull's dragon-like servitor Grendel, stolen from the Maker (Reed Richards of Earth-1610), to resurrect Carnage with restored legs and healed burns. The connection to Knull motivated Carnage to collect codices (genetic imprints left by symbiotes in all hosts), starting with Scorn's, intending to awaken Knull when enough were gathered. Carnage returned to Doverton, established the Church of New Darkness to stockpile more codices, and created an obedient army using brain parasites, controlling them with spires on both coasts. Carnage killed former symbiotic host and Spirit of Vengeance Alejandra Jones, briefly displaying a Ghost Rider's attributes, stalked former symbiotic super hero Mania (Andrea "Andi" Benton), and sought revenge on Deadpool. Gaining tremendous power after absorbing the Venom symbiote bonded to Hulk (Bruce Banner), Kasady nearly slew Brock's alleged son, Dylan, but Brock, empowered by numerous codices, tore Kasady's spine out, killing him, though Kasady's personality apparently survived within the Carnage symbiote, which attempted to forcibly bond to Brock. On Isla De Huesos, Brock, along with Venom and remote help from Dylan, using apparent symbiote-controlling powers, successfully cast Carnage out. The symbiote survived and fled the island by apparently bonding to a shark.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES (ABRIDGED): Kasady was the host for at least four symbiotic alien creatures over time, at least one of which bonded with his blood cells and DNA, making it impossible to completely remove without killing him. The Carnage symbiotes each shared a telepathic bond with their hosts. For unrevealed reasons, each symbiote tended to conform to Kasady's personality and the general appearance of his original symbiote, even when separated from him; the Poison symbiote was a partial exception, maintaining portions of its white coloring and "crystalline" edges. Each symbiote granted Kasady super strength (lifting roughly 10 to 50 tons; the Grendel symbiote let him lift 75 tons), enhanced durability and stamina; the symbiotes have shown great ability to heal Kasady's mind and body (apparently greater than other symbiotes), even resurrecting him after death, and have apparently allowed his consciousness to survive within the symbiote after the death of his body. Carnage could stick to walls and generate tendrils to act as "swing lines" for travel. Like his "parent" symbiote, Venom, Carnage could create elongated claws and teeth, but he could also project parts of his symbiotes as various bladed weapons that disintegrated after approximately 10 seconds of separation. The symbiotes could absorb conventional small weapons fire, but they were vulnerable to heat-based attacks and sonics until gaining an immunity via the curse of the *Darkhold*; it is unclear whether the Grendel incarnation of Carnage retained this immunity. They could mimic clothing, impersonate other people, deaden Spider-Man's spider-sense to a degree, and block Venom's ability to track its offspring. Kasady could manipulate others by covering them with his symbiote, but the more individuals covered, the more concentration was required to maintain control. Kasady learned to increase his symbiote's mass by absorbing (or consuming) other symbiotes or large quantities of meat; after absorbing the Hall Industries symbiotic armor, Kasady projected himself through biofeedback in a data stream, threatening a hostile takeover of the computer systems of Iron Man (Tony Stark). For a time, Kasady wore a prosthetic lower body and legs that were powered by the symbiote, but they crumbled when separated from the symbiote. Kasady was a skilled street fighter and diagnosed sociopathic narcissist that didn't feel guilt, remorse, pity, or compassion.

FIRST APPEARANCE: (Cletus Kasady) *Amazing Spider-Man #344* (1991); (Carnage) *Amazing Spider-Man #361* (1992)

ART BY DANILO S. BEYRUTH, IBAN COELLO, CLAYTON CRAIN, JUAN FRIGERI, FRANCESCO MOBILI, MIKE PERKINS, STEPHEN SEGOVIA, DECLAN SHALVEY & RYAN STEGMAN

GHOST-SPIDER

REAL NAME: Gwendolyn Maxine "Gwen" Stacy
ALIASES: Formerly Spider-Woman, "Spider-Gwen," Venom, "Gwenom"; impersonated the Prime Reality's Gwen Stacy clone
IDENTITY: Publicly known on Earth-65, known to authorities in Prime Reality
OCCUPATION: Student, musician; former bodega clerk
CITIZENSHIP: USA, with a criminal record (Earth-65)
PLACE OF BIRTH: Forest Hills, Queens, New York (Earth-65)
GROUP AFFILIATIONS: Order of the Web; formerly Mary Janes, Web-Warriors
HEIGHT: 5'5"
WEIGHT: 125 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Blonde

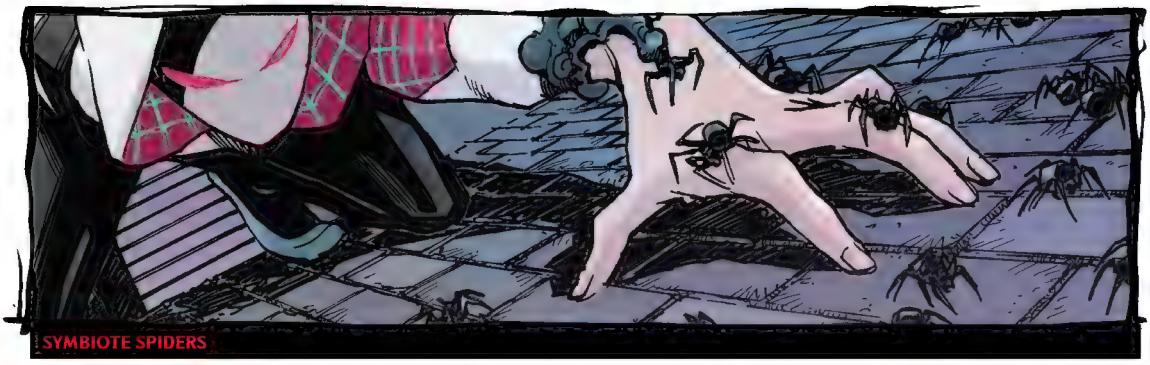
HISTORY: On the alternate Earth-65, a radioactive spider created by Cindy Moon's subversive S.I.L.K. organization bit teenage musician Gwen Stacy and gave her superhuman spiderlike powers. Gwen became the costumed Spider-Woman for thrills and fame, but her carefree lifestyle ended when her friend Peter Parker, inspired by Spider-Woman's superhuman feats, used a mutagenic serum to gain powers but instead became the monstrous Lizard. After Parker died in battle with her, Gwen swore that she would make his death meaningful by fighting for justice in his name, even if it meant defying the law as a vigilante. As a super hero, she battled the Rhino (Alexei Sytsevich), the Vulture (Adrian Toomes), and Hand ninja clan leader/lawyer Matt Murdock; she was also drawn into a multiversal war of spider-heroes against the vampiric Inheritors of Earth-001, after which she joined the cross-dimensional Web-Warriors to repair the damage the Inheritors had done. She struggled to balance superheroics with her obligations to her father, NYPD Captain George Stacy (who didn't arrest Gwen after learning of her secret identity), and her bandmates in the Mary Janes. She faced a personal crisis when her old friend Harry Osborn hunted her down as the costumed Green Goblin, believing she killed Parker. Despite Osborn using the Lizard serum to increase his power, Gwen bested him, and even though he learned her identity, she ultimately let him escape.

A visit from Prime Reality spider-heroes Spider-Woman (Jessica Drew) and Silk (Cindy Moon) turned into a crisis when S.I.L.K. stole Gwen's dimensional travel device, using it to steal advanced technology from the Prime Reality; in the ensuing conflict, Earth-65's Moon deactivated Gwen's powers, but was still defeated by the trio. A penitent S.I.L.K. agent gave Gwen an isotope activator, a device that gave her temporary doses of spider-powers; however, it had a limited number of charges. She briefly contemplated giving up her Spider-Woman identity entirely, but soon a new challenge presented itself when unstable police officer and ex-mercenary Frank Castle became obsessed with defeating her. Castle retreated in shame when George Stacy's partner, Jean DeWolff, pointed out that his destructive pursuit of Spider-Woman made him as much of a criminal as her, and George himself surrendered to the police, confessing to abetting Spider-Woman by knowingly allowing her to operate; George was subsequently sent to jail. Concerned for her father's safety, Gwen made a deal with Murdock: In exchange for his help in providing her father's legal defense, she would owe him her service. Murdock further exerted his power over Gwen by acquiring a new supply of power doses from the imprisoned Moon.

Learning that numerous realities had been devastated by a variant of the Carrion virus accidentally unleashed by Peter Parkers from other realities, Gwen teamed with the Prime Reality's Scarlet Spider (Kaine) to stop New U, a cloning company run by the Prime Reality's Ben Reilly, which threatened to unleash a similar plague on his Earth; she posed as Reilly's second-in-command, a clone of his Earth's deceased Gwen Stacy. With help from Spider-Man (the Prime Reality's Peter Parker), they shut down New U and averted disaster. In another multiversal adventure, Murdock sent Gwen to stop rogue S.I.L.K. operative Scorpion (Jefferson Davis) from fulfilling schemes that could threaten Murdock's interests in S.I.L.K.; she joined forces with Spider-Man (Miles Morales), whose father, Earth-1610's counterpart of Davis, was trying to stop the Scorpion for S.H.I.E.L.D. The two ultimately prevailed with the help of their counterparts from Earth-8, who had married each other and started a family of super heroes; both Miles and Gwen found the idea uncomfortable, and decided to merely remain friends.

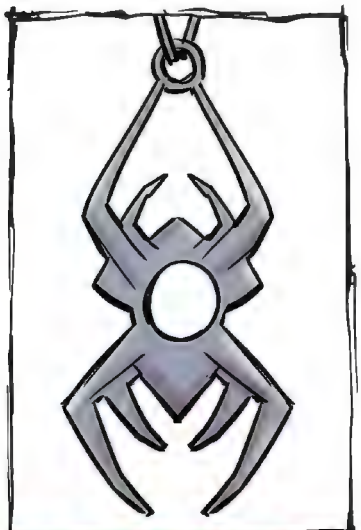
Irked that she let the Scorpion live, Murdock gave Spider-Woman another mission of tracking down the fugitive Harry Osborn then using a radioactive isotope to mutate the Lizard Serum inside him into an artificial Venom symbiote and extract it; Gwen remained unaware Murdock secretly intended for the symbiote to take Gwen as a host. In Madripoor, she found Harry and used the isotope on him, but the symbiote soon claimed Gwen. However, Gwen and the symbiote bonded — preventing it from overwhelming her — which restored her lost powers.

Soon, Gwen learned her father had been left comatose after being beaten by the Rhino, Murdock's agent in the jail, apparently in retaliation for Gwen failing to bring in Osborn. With her symbiote feeding her negative emotions, Gwen went on a brutal rampage through Murdock's organization. Finally, she confronted and defeated Murdock, shaming him in the eyes of the Hand; she refused to kill him, however, and let S.H.I.E.L.D. arrest him. Afterward, tired of running from justice, she surrendered herself to the police. Put on trial and convicted for her vigilante activities, the court showed leniency for her heroism, sentencing her to only one year in prison. During her time in prison, Gwen's symbiote healed her father and brought him out of his coma.



SYMBIOTE SPIDERS

Released from prison after a year, Gwen tried to rebuild her life and relationships with her father (who had been released during Gwen's incarceration), the Mary Janes, and Harry Osborn, but her new notoriety and public identity made these tasks difficult, as she was fawned over by admirers and targeted by enemies. When the Inheritors returned, the Web-Warriors summoned Gwen to action, but during the battle her dimensional travel device was damaged, accidentally sending Gwen to Earth-3109, where she faced an alternate version of herself who had become the Green Goblin, and helped that Gwen's friends cure her of her madness. Grateful for her help, Gwen of Earth-3109 helped repair her dimensional travel device, allowing her to rejoin the fight against the Inheritors. While Gwen, the Web-Warriors, and other spider-themed allies were victorious, the Web of Life and Destiny was destroyed during the battle, ending the Web-Warriors' interdimensional access; however, Gwen could still use her repaired device to travel between worlds.

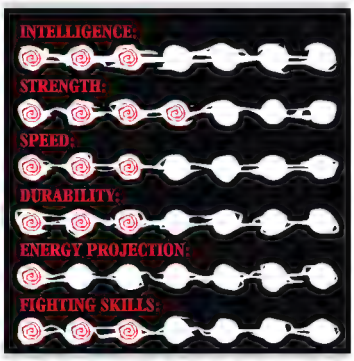


DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL DEVICE

Back home on Earth-65, Gwen clashed with the lupine Man-Wolf (John Jameson) and his gang, but they retaliated against her by bombing a Mary Janes concert, critically injuring Harry Osborn. Needing a place where her identity was still secret, she began commuting to attend courses at the Prime Reality's Empire State University, thanks to a recommendation from that reality's Peter Parker and an academic scholarship. Feeling haunted by the deaths she experienced in her life, and needing a new codename when in this reality due to its own native Spider-Woman, she dubbed herself Ghost-Spider. Gwen still encountered danger, clashing with Jackal (Miles Warren), who was obsessed with the Prime Reality's Gwen Stacy when she was alive, and stumbling into one of the assassin Arcade's malfunctioning Murderworlds.

On Earth-65 Stacy believed she had found new allies when super-powered social media influencers Susan and Johnny Storm became public figures, but she soon realized they were both sociopathic and craved her fame and adulation. They threatened the safety of her friends unless she left, leaving them as New York's sole heroes. To protect her loved ones, Stacy journeyed to the Prime Reality, intending to make it her new home for the time being. There, she joined with several spider-powered allies in the Order of the Web — the Web-Warriors' successors, formed after the Web of Life and Death had been rebuilt — to aid Spider-Man against the mysterious Kindred (Harry Osborn).

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Ghost-Spider wears an artificial Venom symbiote, composed of a swarm of tiny spiderlike creatures that grants her superhuman strength (lifting approximately 10 tons), endurance, agility, lets her cling to surfaces, and grants a spider-sense that warns her of danger. It can form her costume, mimic other clothing, or camouflage her appearance. It can also generate ensnaring tendrils or organic webbing, heal Gwen's injuries, and provide Gwen with oxygen when her airway is restricted. High-intensity sound or heat can disrupt the bond between Gwen and her symbiote. Due to her mental bond with the spiders, she can use them as semi-autonomous scouts. To fuel her symbiote, Stacy must consume a cellulose-heavy diet. She wears a device on a necklace that allows her to travel between alternate Earths. Previously, she relied on a S.I.L.K. isotope activator to give her temporary doses of spider-powers and she employed a pair of wrist-mounted mechanical web-shooters that she used to create weblines, web-cocoons, or impromptu "web-wings." She also formerly used a wrist device to communicate and travel between alternate realities with the Web-Warriors. She is a skilled drummer.



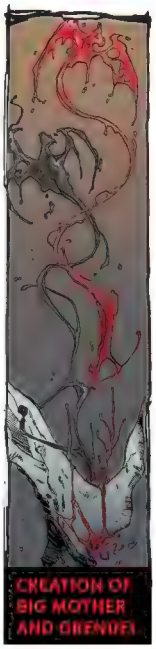
FIRST APPEARANCE: (Spider-Woman) *Edge of Spider-Verse #2* (2014); (Venom) *Spider-Gwen #24* (2017); (Ghost-Spider) *Spider-Gwen: Ghost-Spider #10* (2019)

ART BY IG GUARA, ROSI KÄMPE, TAKESHI MIYAZAWA, JORGE MOLINA & ROBBI RODRIGUEZ

GRENDEL

REAL NAME: Grendel
ALIASES: None
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Servitor of Knull, marauder
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unrevealed region of space
KNOWN RELATIVES: Big Mother (supposed mother), Knull (creator)
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
EDUCATION: None
HEIGHT: Variable
WEIGHT: Variable
EYES: Solid white
HAIR: None

HISTORY: Billions of years ago, the ancient deity Knull created an army of the precursors of the Symbiote race, and set them loose to ravage the cosmos. Two resembling giant dragons, later dubbed Grendel and Big Mother, came to Earth in the sixth century. They raided a settlement in Scandinavia, and faced the Norse god Thor Odinson. Thor defeated Grendel, and it sank beneath the sea, where it became frozen in ice. In 1965, Project S.H.I.E.L.D. (which preceded the formal peacekeeping S.H.I.E.L.D. by decades) recovered and revived Grendel, taking samples of it to bond to human subjects. Project S.H.I.E.L.D. deployed the resulting Sym-Soldiers to fight in the Vietnam War. However, agonizing tests the researchers put Grendel through drove the symbiotes and their hosts insane; most were permanently put in stasis, but one escaped by mimicking its dead host, Rex Strickland. Eventually, the program was shuttered, and Grendel placed in stasis; however, the secretive Weapon Plus program acquired several Grendel samples, which they cloned to produce psychically baffled, symbiote-powered armor, dubbed "Weapon V," under the supervision of Dr. Andrew Breen, a secret Knull cultist. In recent years, S.H.I.E.L.D. collapsed, and Grendel was scheduled to be destroyed — but while in transit, the symbiote vigilante Venom (Eddie Brock) accidentally freed it while trying to rescue the Sym-Soldiers on behalf of "Strickland." It rampaged through New York City and was confronted by Venom; Knull used Grendel as a conduit to speak to him, revealing the true origins of the Symbiote race. Brock weakened the creature with high-tech anti-symbiote weaponry, and "Strickland" sacrificed himself by restraining the creature as Brock pushed it into a blast furnace, apparently destroying it. Later, the amoral Maker (Earth-1610's Reed Richards) acquired a sample of Grendel; a Knull-worshipping cult stole it and used it to revive the serial killer Cletus Kasady as Carnage. During his quest for codices (remnants of symbiotes left in hosts), Carnage killed nearly all Weapon V personnel, presumably absorbing the cloned Grendel material, though the original samples remain in deep stasis under Weapon Plus' control. The Grendel fragment survived Kasady's apparent death and Brock's subsequent attempt to destroy it, later apparently bonding to a shark.



NOTES: *Grendel should not be confused with the Dark Elf hybrid Grendell, though it is believed elements of both creatures' histories were used as inspiration for the epic poem* Beowulf*;* Supernatural Thrillers #3 *(1973) references Beowulf's foe as a "fearsome fire monster" but it is not clear if this is Grendel or Grendell. Though created at the same time, Grendel is largely accepted as the son of Big Mother. Considering symbiotes' vulnerability to fire, depictions of Big Mother and Grendel breathing fire remain unexplained.*

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Grendel was an immense, nigh-immortal dragon-like creature capable of traveling through space. Composed of living abyss, it could spawn numerous independent symbiotes from itself. It was vulnerable to intense sound and heat.

INTELLIGENCE:
STRENGTH:
SPEED:
DURABILITY:
ENERGY PROJECTION:
FIGHTING SKILLS:

FIRST APPEARANCE: *Venom #1* (2018)

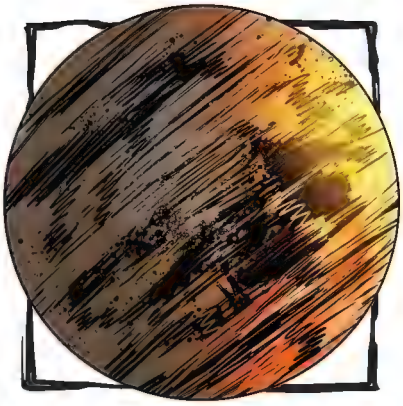
ART BY CHRIS MOONEYHAM & RYAN STEGMAN

KLYNTAR

NAME: Klyntar ("cage" in the symbiote language)
GALAXY: Milky Way (60,000 light-years from Earth)
STAR SYSTEM: Unidentified binary stars
DIAMETER: 11,842 km
MASS: 7.2E+24 kg
ORBITAL DISTANCE: 1.8 AU to primary sun
MAJOR SATELLITES: Hundreds of asteroids
POPULATION: Near-incalculable (at time of destruction)
SIGNIFICANT INHABITANTS: Knull, Venom, Grendel, Big Mother, Agents of the Cosmos
SIGNIFICANT LOCATIONS: Agents of the Cosmos headquarters including an arena, Knull's prison at the center of the planet

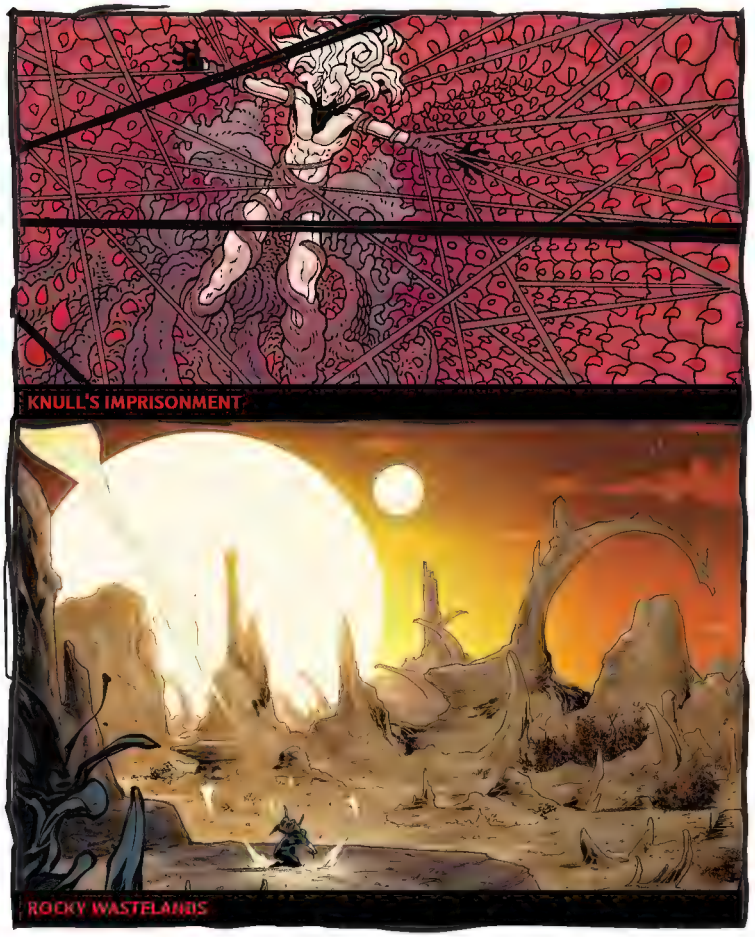
HISTORY: Approximately 3,000 years ago, the ancient elder god Knull created his latest servants, a race of symbiotic creatures, which he controlled through a hive mind, using them to terrorize the universe. During one such attack on the planet Earth, the Asgardian god Thor severed Knull's connection to his symbiotes while battling his dragon-like servitor, Grendel; freed from Knull's control, the symbiotes spread throughout the universe seeking out hosts with which to bond and becoming "infected" by notions of honor and nobility. Untethered from Knull's control, the symbiotes spawned endlessly, rose up against their creator, and trapped Knull within a planet-sized mass of symbiotes called Klyntar, their word for "cage."

Imprisoned at Klyntar's core, Knull slept while Klyntar somehow began to evolve into a planet, forming large rocky wastelands, lush symbiotic forests, and breeding caverns. The symbiotes also underwent a transformation, with some remaining in their recognizable liquid-like state near the planet's surface, and others taking on the shape of all kinds of flora and fauna. Free of Knull's influence, the symbiotes dedicated themselves to building a great society of noble warriors, but realized that to do so they would require hosts that met a perfect blend of moral and physical ideals. Hosts who fell short of this ideal often became monstrous and corrupted, spreading lies and half-truths about the symbiotes' intentions through the universe.



Eager to redeem themselves, the symbiotes sought out worthy hosts from various species, establishing the Agents of the Cosmos, an organization capable of sensing the "voices" of the Cosmos and dedicated to maintaining peace across the universe. The Agents of the Cosmos established a base on Klyntar, which included an arena where corrupted symbiotes could be purged of negative emotions and memories.

At some point in the past, while searching for planets for his master Galactus (Galan) to consume, the Silver Surfer (Norrin Radd) happened upon Klyntar, only to be trapped in the planet's core where he discovered the captive Knull before escaping. Later still, sometime during the Kree/Skrull War, the Kree harvested an outcast symbiote from Klyntar, believing it to be cognitively damaged, and bonded it with soldier Tel-Kar, who used it to infiltrate the Skrulls. This symbiote eventually made its way to Earth and became known as Venom. Over subsequent years, the Symbiotes monitored Venom. Believing he'd achieved true heroism after bonding with "Flash" Thompson, but aware the pair suffered from a broken symbiosis, the Symbiotes drew them and their Guardians of the Galaxy teammates to Klyntar to repair the damage. Unable to verbally communicate, the Symbiotes temporarily bonded with the Guardians to reveal their noble intentions before "curing" Venom and making him a proper



Agent of the Cosmos, complete with a new appearance and enhanced abilities. However, the cure was incomplete, as a separate clone of Venom on Earth bore a Hell-Mark; still connected to the clone, Flash's symbiote continued to wrestle with rage, prompting Venom to return to Klyntar. Venom learned his problem's cause and returned to Earth to resolve it.

Sometime after this, the bounty hunter Haze Mancer captured many symbiotes from Klyntar to sell as biological weapons, using a chemical concoction to bind the symbiotes to their hosts. Five of these were sold to the space pirate Killer Thrill, which resulted in a clash with Venom and the time-displaced original X-Men. Meanwhile, the Poisons, a species that harvested symbiotes across the multiverse to consume their superhuman hosts, abducted symbiotes from Klyntar, using them to force Earth's superhumans to join their army, the Hive, and devastating the Agents of the Cosmos' ranks. The Hive's threat was ended when the combined forces of Venom and the time-displaced X-Men destroyed the Poison Queen. The symbiotes were then returned to Klyntar.

When the symbiotes' hold on Knull weakened, he used his control over symbiotes to make the long-dormant Grendel, and later Carnage (Cletus Kasady), retrieve codices from current and former symbiote hosts (genetic imprints left behind by symbiotes) to regain his power. Carnage gathered enough codices to fully awaken Knull, who then freed himself from the symbiotes' hold, destroying Klyntar in the process.

NOTE: *Klyntar is not to be confused with the unidentified planet near Klyntar, former home of Gorr the God Butcher and Knull's former base, nor the "Planet of the Symbiotes" from which symbiotes had attempted to invade Earth through a gateway into Upstate New York in 1995's Spider-Man family* Super Special *issues.*

FIRST APPEARANCE: ***Spider-Man Family #1*** **(2007); (identified)** ***Venom: Space Knight #12*** **(2016)**

ART BY IBAN COELLO, KIM JACINTO, TRADD MOORE, DIO NEVES, GERARDO SANDOVAL, VALERIO SCHITI & RYAN STEGMAN

KNULL

REAL NAME: Knull
ALIASES: The King in Black, The Lord of the Great Unending Abyss, Lord of the Anti-Light, Abyss Made Flesh, Destroyer of Stars
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: God of symbiotes and darkness; former god of the forge
CITIZENSHIP: Inapplicable
PLACE OF BIRTH: The void before the Big Bang (presumably)
KNOWN RELATIVES: Every symbiote (creations)
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
EDUCATION: Self-taught
HEIGHT: 8'10" (variable)
WEIGHT: 630 lbs.
EYES: Black (red pupils)
HAIR: White

HISTORY: Knull apparently came into existence in the endless void prior to the Big Bang. Content in the abyss, he was angered by creation, particularly the cosmic Celestials shaping matter in the forming universe, so he created All-Black, the first precursor to the Symbiote race and used it to behead a Celestial. After forging All-Black into a powerful sword inside the fallen Celestial's body, Knull sought to destroy brightness, slaying and enslaving gods and creating an army of servant creatures (other symbiote precursors, including some that resembled giant dragons) and a fortress on a distant world; while creating his army Knull discarded failed creature experiments in a realm later called the Exoteric Latitude. At some point in ancient history, a time-displaced Silver Surfer (Norrin Radd) encountered Knull, who attempted to enslave him. To escape, Surfer used his Power Cosmic to create a small star to blast Knull across the cosmos.

Approximately 3,000 years ago, Knull battled an unidentified god high above a nameless planet. The two gods crashed into the planet where they were discovered by the native Gorr, whose anger at gods over the suffering and death of his family caused All-Black to desert Knull and bond with Gorr. Gorr used All-Black to seemingly slay the two gods, although Knull survived. After All-Black was taken from him, Knull began creating fully symbiotic servants (modern symbiotes) and bonded them with the creatures of Gorr's world, formed a hive mind with himself at the center, then sending them throughout space to kill gods and terrorize worlds. Two dragon-like servitors came to Earth in the sixth century, where they became known as Big Mother and Grendel; the latter was defeated by the god Thor Odinson. Thor's lightning severed its connection with Knull and disrupted the hive mind, leaving symbiotes scattered across the galaxy where they began independently seeking hosts. Guided by new minds, symbiotes rose up against Knull, trapping him within a planet-sized mass of symbiotes called Klyntar, their word for "cage." Loyal symbiotes formed Knull cults, including one on Earth in the American colonies in 1664.

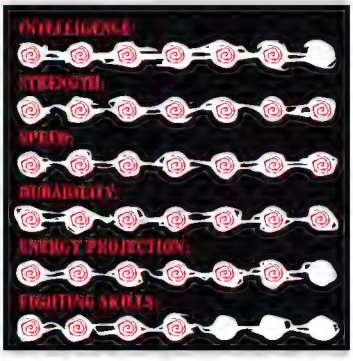
Centuries later, government agency Project S.H.I.E.L.D. (which preceded the peacekeeping S.H.I.E.L.D. by decades) discovered the frozen Grendel and took portions of it to form symbiote super-soldiers during the Vietnam War. In modern times, Grendel was accidentally revived by the symbiote-wearing Venom (Eddie Brock) and rampaged through Manhattan, where it was confronted by Venom and Spider-Man (Miles Morales). Knull manifested himself through Grendel and attempted to reclaim the Venom symbiote, but an interruption by Morales prevented the rebonding. Finding the final piece of Grendel, which had assumed the form of its deceased host Rex Strickland, the Venom symbiote absorbed it into itself and fought Knull, to keep the

symbiote god from reclaiming it. Knull absorbed both Venom and "Rex" into Grendel's form, but Brock had seeded the symbiote with flash grenades, which exploded, weakening Grendel and freeing Venom. Merged with the beast, "Rex" took control long enough to hurl Grendel and itself into a furnace, which Brock held shut until Grendel was apparently incinerated. However, the Maker (Reed Richards of Earth-1610) recovered a sample that was later stolen by Knull cultists, who attempted to use Carnage (Cletus Kasady) as a host for Knull's consciousness, but the god was unable to take over the insane Kasady's mind. Kasady desired contact with Knull again and took over the cult after apparently killing leader Scorn (Tanis Nieves), then began tracking down other symbiote hosts to harvest their codices, genetic imprints left behind after bonding.

KNULL AND UNIDENTIFIED GOD

With nearly enough codices gathered to awaken Knull, Kasady battled Brock, who seemingly killed him, absorbing the codices from Carnage, which connected him to Knull. Knull awakened, destroyed Klyntar, and transformed its component symbiotes into symbiote dragons, leading them Earthward. Dylan Brock, Eddie's alleged son, secretly kept a piece of the Carnage symbiote, through which Knull was able to contact Dylan, simultaneously attacking Brock psychically through his nightmares. Dylan, possessing powers presumably from allegedly having two symbiote hosts and a symbiote as parents, expelled the Carnage remnants from both himself and Eddie, severing Knull's control; Eddie subsequently went to the Avengers to warn them of Knull. On his way to Earth, Knull devastated planets in his wake, including the avian-populated Fallo.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Knull is apparently older than the universe and a being of immense power. Practically indestructible, he can survive the vacuum of space and solar heat. He can pull matter from shadow and create symbiotes that he can command and use their senses over limitless space, even projecting a manifestation of himself through them; symbiotes that have learned compassion and independence from their sentient hosts are harder to command. He can communicate with symbiotes and their hosts directly or through their dreams. Symbiotes under Knull's control often manifest spiral-shaped emblems on their faces. For many millennia, Knull carried All-Black, an immensely powerful symbiote that generally held the form of a powerful sword.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Thor: God of Thunder #6* (2013); (identified) *Venom #3* (2018)

ART BY BUTCH GUICE & RYAN STEGMAN

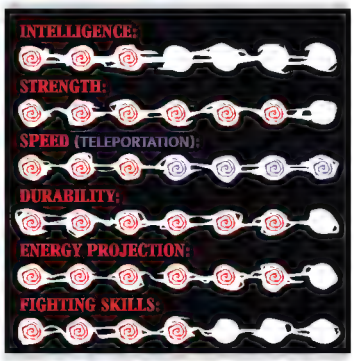
FORGING ALL-BLACK

MARQUIS RADU

REAL NAME: Radu
ALIASES: Avatar of Chaos, Baron Radu
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Conqueror, scientist, mystic
CITIZENSHIP: Presumably Homeworld
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unrevealed
KNOWN RELATIVES: None
GROUP AFFILIATION: Commander of an army and an unidentified group of agents
EDUCATION: Trained by one of the Microverse's most vile conquerors
HEIGHT: 6'10" (Microverse equivalent)
WEIGHT: Approximately 210 lbs. (Microverse equivalent)
EYES: Unrevealed
HAIR: Unrevealed

HISTORY: At least a millennium ago, symbiote creatures invaded the Microverse (a reality accessed via energies of shrinking) and were narrowly driven away, but not before their nature poisoned the Microverse's matter. In modern times, Marquis Radu, a student and follower of one of the Microverse's most vile conquerors, rose from mad scientist to despot while defeating all challengers. Seeking to rule as a god, Radu plotted to use symbiotes from the Macroverse (the Prime Reality's universe) to annihilate and remake the Microverse's binding power, the Enigma Force, under his command. Radu asked Earth's Carnage (Cletus Kasady) to travel to the Microverse and slay the Enigma Force's embodiment, former Spartak ruler the Redeemer; however, Radu secretly intended to use his bio-engineering Body Banks to repeatedly clone Carnage's symbiote. Radu sent his agents to break Kasady out of prison and return with him via the Prometheus Pit dimensional portal (created by Professor Phillip Prometheus and rebuilt by Dr. Ketola). Kasady's violent breakout and subsequent actions attracted the Spider-Man (Peter Parker) clone Scarlet Spider (Kaine) and symbiote-bonded hero Agent Venom ("Flash" Thompson) who pursued Carnage into the Microverse after Carnage kidnapped Thompson's reporter friend, Katy Kiernan. Advised by Kiernan he was being used, Carnage slaughtered most of Radu's agents, except one to lead him to Radu, who swiftly subdued Carnage. Meanwhile, the Enigma Force team (Bug, Flare, Mari, Quark, Arcturus Rann) — under the guidance of their former teammate Redeemer — recruited Agent Venom only to be captured by Radu's forces. Kiernan refused Radu's offer to be his chronicler and guide to the Macroverse, which he intended to conquer next. Radu successfully cloned Carnage and Agent Venom's symbiotes, but Carnage usurped control of the clones after they consumed the intended hosts. The Enigma Force team broke free and engaged Radu, who abandoned his plot and teleported away. Agent Venom and Scarlet Spider then followed Carnage to Earth where they defeated him, and Agent Venom destroyed the clones.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Marquis Radu possesses powerful mystical and technological abilities, enabling him to fight off armies and incapacitate Carnage with a single blow. A cyborg, he has an armored chest/abdominal plate and clawed, bionic gauntlets, which can project energy blasts or be launched and remotely controlled; he can also project blasts from his gauntlet-less wrists. He can withstand symbiotes' touch, otherwise deadly to the Microverse and its inhabitants. He can teleport unspecified distances, and use the Body Banks to break down, transform, or rebuild others. He commands armored troops and operates out of an immense arachnid-like mobile fortress.



FIRST APPEARANCE: (Behind-the-scenes) *Minimum Carnage Alpha #1* (2012); (partially seen) *Scarlet Spider #11* (2012); (identified) *Venom #26* (2012); (fully seen) *Scarlet Spider #12* (2013)

ART BY REILLY BROWN & DECLAN SHALVEY

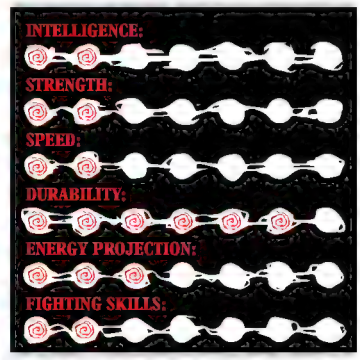
MISTER E

REAL NAME: Unrevealed
ALIASES: "Shadow monster," "Shadow Dude"
IDENTITY: Secret
OCCUPATION: Would-be conqueror; former scout
CITIZENSHIP: Shadowverse
PLACE OF BIRTH: Shadowverse
KNOWN RELATIVES: None
GROUP AFFILIATION: His own army of Shadow Slaves
EDUCATION: Unrevealed
HEIGHT: Variable (presumably)
WEIGHT: Variable (presumably)
EYES: Light blue
HAIR: Unrevealed

HISTORY: In his mission to return reality to darkness, the ancient god Knull sent a symbiotic slave to Earth. This symbiote adopted the "warrior's art of survival" to bring about an invasion of the "Shadowverse," but actually wanted to control Earth and be worshipped as a god. The symbiote claimed NASA employee Louis Tuttle as a host, and as "Mister E," attacked Cape Canaveral intending to steal their newly developed solar shuttle and use it to cast "negatron particles" into Earth's sun to turn it into a black star and cause galaxy-wide darkness. Mister E converted many of Cape Canaveral's personnel into Shadow Slaves under his control, but when his efforts caused a blackout, he unwittingly drew the attention of teenager Steve Coffin, whose father Ray was hospitalized at the Cape's Kennedy Hospital. To stop Mister E, the cosmic Uni-Power tapped Coffin to become the latest Captain Universe. Coffin traced the Shadow Slaves back to monologuing Mister E, who then dispatched Shadow Slaves to distract Captain Universe while he successfully launched the solar shuttle, which had been transformed to suit Mister E's needs by aeronautic engineers turned Shadow Slaves. Captain Universe pursued, breached its hull, and turned the shuttle so the Sun's heat and light poured through the breach, apparently killing Tuttle; however, the symbiote somehow survived and returned to Earth. Months later, the symbiote went to the Ravencroft Institute for the Criminally Insane, approaching inmate Alistaire Smythe — former college classmate of Tuttle and criminal foe of Spider-Man (Peter Parker, who had somehow returned to wearing a symbiote as a costume at the time) — and convinced him to become its host. Soon, in his capacity as a photographer, Peter Parker accompanied *Daily Bugle* reporter Ned Leeds in reporting Smythe's claim to have created paralysis-curing cybernetic implants. As Mister E, Smythe claimed the Institute's population as Shadow Slaves and came to blows with Spider-Man while trying to convince Spider-Man's symbiote to join Knull's cause. During the confrontation, Mister E was impaled by the Ebony Blade-wielding Avenger Black Knight (Dane Whitman), who was coincidentally passing by; the defeated Mister E subsequently fled.

NOTES: *Mister E's use of "Shadowverse/Shadow Realm" presumably references Knull's all-encompassing darkness, rather than a dimension unto itself. The events of Symbiote Spider-Man: King in Black #1 (2020) depict Spider-Man wearing his symbiote costume at a time after he had rejected it; how this came about remains unrevealed. In Reality-80119 Mister E successfully darkened the Sun and spread his influence to other galaxies.*

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Mister E's molecular makeup resembles that of a living shadow, allowing him to manipulate and elongate his form and mass at will, even using its living darkness to create animated "shadow demons," construct rudimentary objects such as superhumanly dense barriers, and impersonate humans. Like most symbiotes, fire and noise can presumably harm Mister E, and it appears it is vulnerable to mystical items (like the Ebony Blade). Mister E can transform other beings into controllable Shadow Slaves via touch; these Shadow Slaves can infect others via injection of their shadow substance. Mister E can pilot otherworldly spacecraft.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Marvel Spotlight #9* (1980)

ART BY STEVE DITKO & GREG LAND

VICTORIA MONTESI

REAL NAME: Victoria "Vicki" Montesi
ALIASES: "Statue lady"
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Occult investigator; former medical resident
CITIZENSHIP: Italy, Vatican City, USA
PLACE OF BIRTH: Rome, Italy
KNOWN RELATIVES: Vittorio Montesi (adoptive father), Chthon (father), unidentified mother, unidentified grandmother, Guiseppe Montesi (adoptive uncle, deceased), Paolo Montesi, Giacomo Montesi, Marcello Montesi (adoptive ancestors, deceased), extended relations through Chthon
GROUP AFFILIATION: Children of the Midnight Sun/Children of Midnight, "the Nine"; formerly Midnight Sons, Darkhold Redeemers
EDUCATION: MD
HEIGHT: 5'11"
WEIGHT: 165 lbs.
EYES: Brown
HAIR: Black

HISTORY: Billions of years ago, the Elder Gods ruled the newborn Earth until most degenerated into demonic beings. One of the most powerful and malignant, Chthon, inscribed his dark magic into indestructible parchment, dubbed the Chthon scrolls. Eventually Chthon's non-demonic sibling, Gaea, spawned the god-eating Demogorge (Atum) to slay her corrupted peers. To survive this purge, Chthon fled to another dimension; though trapped there, he left behind his scrolls to continue to influence Earth and ultimately return there. In the sixth-century C.E., most of the scrolls were gathered and bound into the *Darkhold*, aka the Book of Sins. The 12th-century monk Paolo Montesi's strong faith allowed him to read the *Darkhold* without succumbing to its corruption, and he uncovered the disturbing Malachy Prophecy warning of Chthon's eventual return: "A woman born of no man and of a woman marked by sin; daughter becomes mother; then will the dark return begin." In response, Pope Eugene III declared Paolo's bloodline the book's custodians, giving the Montesi priests special dispensation to marry and sire heirs.

CASTING SPELL FROM *DARKHOLD*

In the 20th century Vittorio Montesi learned he was sterile. Desperate to produce an heir to guard the *Darkhold*, he used a fertility spell from the book to sire a child, Victoria ("Vicki"), with his American wife, unaware he was fulfilling the prophecy and that the child's true father was Chthon. Subconsciously sensing this, Vittorio resented Vicki. The problem worsened both when she rejected his teachings and her familial duties as superstitious nonsense and when she came out as gay. Choosing to become a doctor, Vicki was in her first year of medical residency at St. Anthony's Hospital in Rome and living with her girlfriend, karate instructor Nash Salvato, when her skepticism was shattered. Another demon, Lilith (Kiskillilla), believing Vicki one of "the Nine" prophesied to oppose her, convinced Interpol Chief Randolph DeGuzman, a secret Darkholder cultist, that Vicki threatened Chthon's return, prompting him to send assassins after her. A bomb intended for Vicki left Salvato severely injured, and at the Vatican's request, Interpol Special Agent Samson Buchanan was assigned to be her bodyguard. Reporting to DeGuzman, Buchanan kept him apprised of Vicki's movements, unwittingly enabling further murder attempts. Almost simultaneously, Chthon's servant, the Dwarf, began distributing loose *Darkhold* pages to unwary recipients, channeling the mystic power for this through an unsuspecting Vicki. Finding herself suddenly beset by visions of the evils unleashed and awareness of the activated pages' locations, Vicki teamed up with the still-skeptical Buchanan and her father's friend, occult expert Professor Louise Hastings, to retrieve the cursed parchments.

Soon after this, sorcerer Doctor Stephen Strange teleported the Nine — Vicki, Buchanan, Hastings, Ghost Rider (Dan Ketch), former Ghost Rider Johnny Blaze, the vampiric Michael Morbius, and occult investigators the

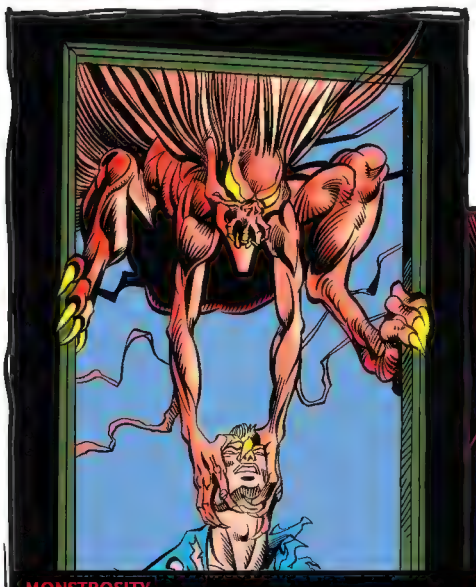
FIRST COMBAT SUIT

EMPOWERED BY *DARKHOLD* PAGE

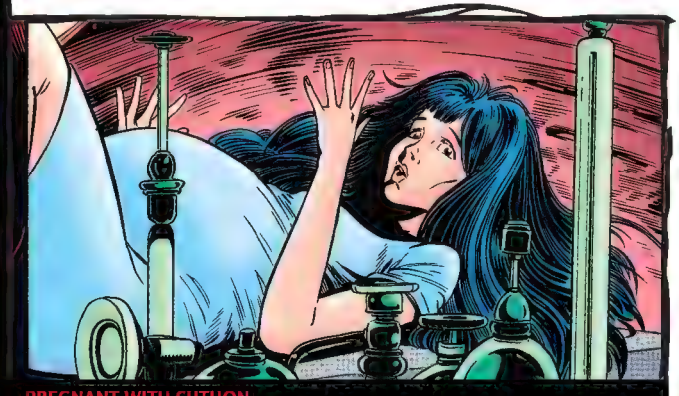
Nightstalkers (Blade/Eric Brooks, Frank Drake and Hannibal King) — to Greenland, where Lilith had opened an interdimensional rift to unleash her demonic children ("Lilin") on Earth. Unaware who had brought them together, the group nevertheless succeeded in stopping Lilith, and thereafter formed the loosely aligned Midnight Sons with other supernatural allies. Vicki, Buchanan, and Hastings, now informally dubbed the "Darkhold Redeemers," continued to gather pages, soon assisted by erstwhile unwilling Chthon servant, Modred the Mystic. During one retrieval attempt, battling Chthon's demonic N'Garai servants in Perfection, South Carolina, Vicki realized that the N'Garai ignored her; not knowing of Vicki's direct relations to Chthon, Hastings wrongly reasoned that her Montesi heritage somehow rendered Vicki invisible to them.

Meanwhile, Salvato's parents had transferred their ailing daughter to Summertide Convalescent Home in New Hope, Connecticut. At Vicki's behest the Redeemers set up a home across the street, allowing Vicki to visit whenever not chasing *Darkhold* pages. Salvato showed signs of recovery under Vicki's care, but rapidly deteriorated during her absences. During one incident, a demon killed Hastings' daughter Caprice, and the group took in Hastings' now-orphaned grandson Will Hastings, aka Jinx. Soon thereafter, DeGuzman convinced Buchanan that Vicki was faking her visions and was secretly in league with the Darkholders, explaining why the cultists kept finding them. On DeGuzman's orders, Buchanan delivered Vicki and Hastings to his superior, but they escaped with Jinx's help, and were reunited with a penitent Buchanan, who finally accepted that he was in love with Vicki and saw through DeGuzman's deception.

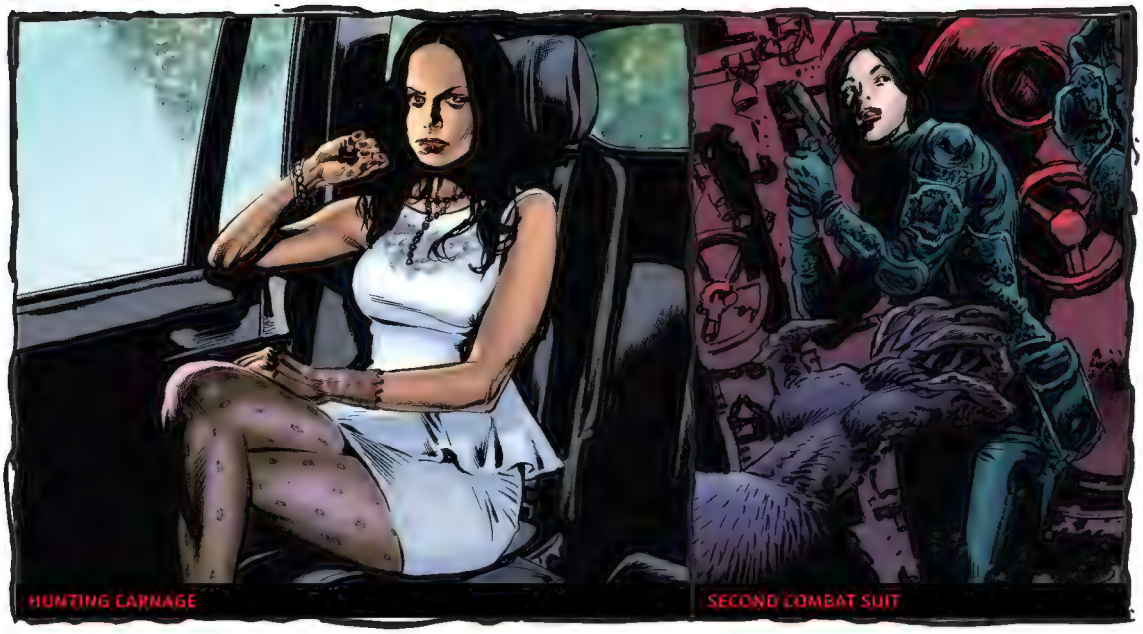
When another *Darkhold* page transformed Blade into Switchblade, and made him obsessed with wiping out all things supernatural, he turned on his fellow Midnight Sons. Knowing he would not hurt normal people, Vicki tried to act as a human shield for Modred, but was slain without hesitation. Hastings restored Blade and resurrected his victims using a counter-spell from



MONSTROSITY



PREGNANT WITH CHTHON



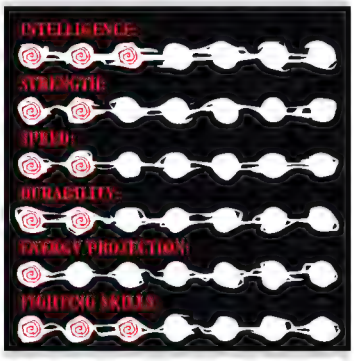
the *Darkhold*, but Vicki wondered why he had been willing to kill her. Investigating the gateway through which Chthon's power was flowing to Earth, Hastings discovered the truth of Vicki's conception, but hesitated to tell her friend; in Hastings' absence, Salvato's doctors informed Vicki that her lover was dying. The Dwarf offered her a *Darkhold* page granting healing powers, and Vicki succumbed to temptation, simultaneously unleashing her dark side as the life-force-stealing Monstrosity. To save Vicki's soul, Salvato convinced Vicki to reject the power and destroy Monstrosity before dying moments later.

When Vicki began suffering sickness in the mornings, she assumed she was merely unwell; however she was unknowingly pregnant with Chthon, possibly due to her use of the *Darkhold*. When the Redeemers were alerted that Lilith had opened an interdimensional rift in Salem Fields Cemetery, in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, they joined the Midnight Sons in trying to shut it. During the conflict, Morbius came under the Lilin Bloodthirst's control and murdered Hastings. Vicki later discovered a letter Hastings had written outlining her findings about Vicki, confirming Vicki's own growing suspicions. With more imminent world-ending threats to deal with, Doctor Strange placed Vicki in stasis to slow her pregnancy and buy time, but Chthon's minion the Midwife awakened Vicki as she neared full-term. Strange realized Chthon was in a uniquely vulnerable state while merged with a human and used the purity of Vicki's soul to drive him back to his prison dimension, ending Vicki's unnatural pregnancy.

Freed, Vicki allied herself with the Children of the Midnight Sun (possibly the Redeemers renamed) to continue blocking Chthon's return. When symbiote-empowered serial killer Carnage (Cletus Kasady) stole the *Darkhold*, Vicki and her ally Yuvraj Singh joined FBI Agent Claire Dixon's anti-Carnage task force, pursuing him to an uncharted island in the Timor Sea inhabited by Broodlings of Chthon, frog-like humanoids who helped Carnage manifest Chthon on Earth. At Vicki's suggestion, her ally Jubulile Van Scotter combined the might of two other symbiotes, Toxin and Raze, to battle Chthon, while Vicki boosted Van Scotter's power to absorb psychic energy with a *Darkhold* spell, successfully banishing Chthon once more. Afterward Vicki enjoyed a brief romance with task force member Manuela Calderon, before their respective responsibilities forced them to part.

NOTE: *Yuvraj Singh, apparently in his fifties, claimed Vicki saved him from the Chthonic Brotherhood when he was a child; Vicki was non-committal when asked about this. How Singh's claim fits with Vicki being seemingly unaware of her supernatural nature and dismissive of the* Darkhold *until comparatively recently remains unrevealed.*

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: While acting as Chthon's unwitting gateway, Vicki could sense the location of *Darkhold* pages in use, sometimes having visions of what they unleashed; this ability apparently remains, although less focused, now that the power no longer directs through her. She has accumulated some proficiency in casting spells from the *Darkhold*, and can inscribe Chthonic symbols on weapons and armor to render them more effective against Chthon's minions. Vicki is proficient with firearms and swords, and has some hand-to-hand training via Salvato and Buchanan. She is at least bilingual, fluent in English and Italian, and is a trained medical doctor.



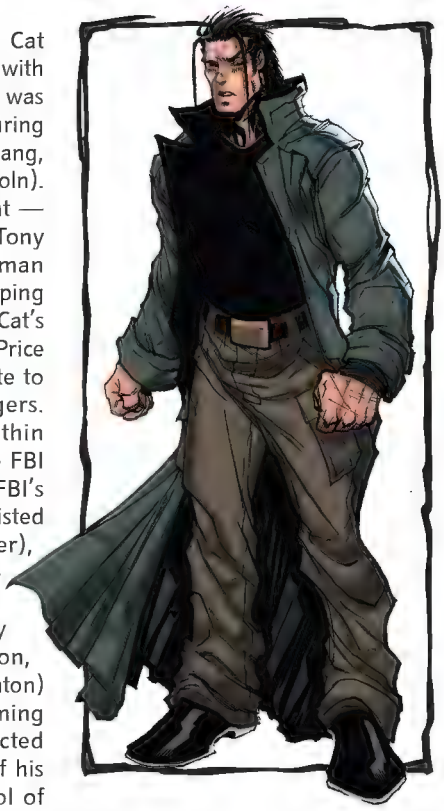
FIRST APPEARANCE: (Vision) *Ghost Rider #28* (1992); (actual) *Darkhold #1* (1992)

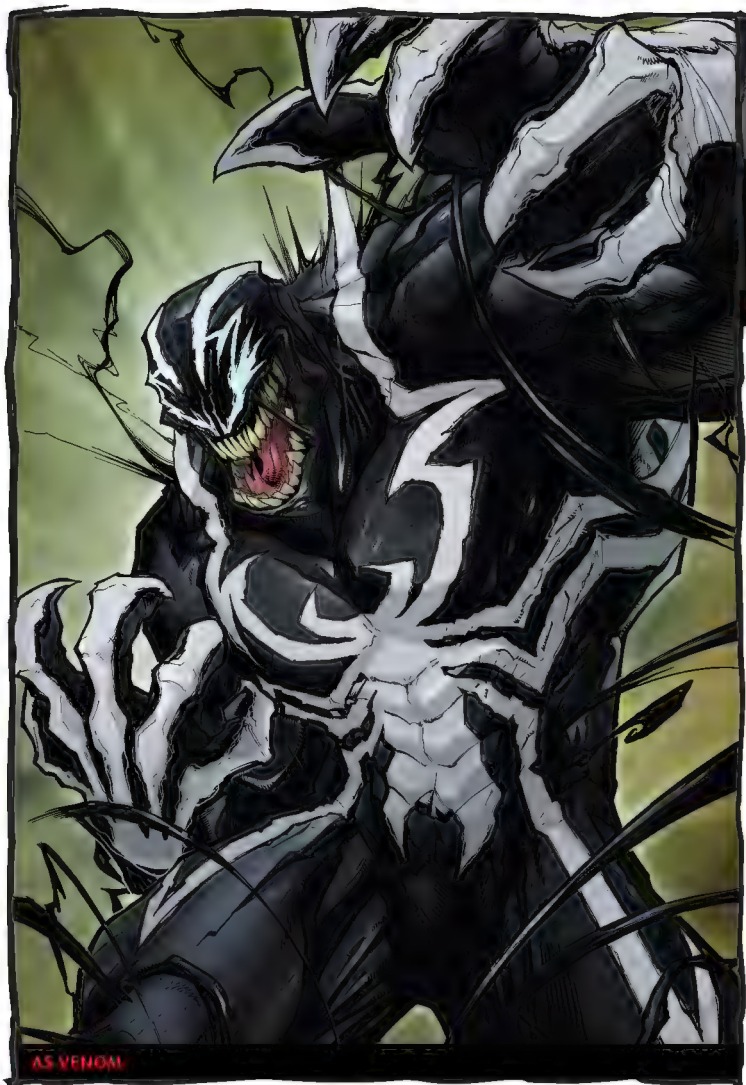
ART BY MARK BUCKINGHAM, NORMAN FELCHLE, ANDY KUBERT, MIKE PERKINS & RURIK TYLER

LEE PRICE

REAL NAME: Lee Price
ALIASES: Formerly Maniac, Venom
IDENTITY: Public
OCCUPATION: Criminal; former U.S. Army Ranger
CITIZENSHIP: USA, with a criminal record
PLACE OF BIRTH: Queens, New York City, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: Unidentified father (deceased), unidentified mother (deceased)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Formerly Black Cat's gang, U.S. Army Rangers
EDUCATION: Military training, presumably U.S. Army Ranger school
HEIGHT: (Price) 6'
(Venom, Maniac) variable
WEIGHT: (Price) 200 lbs.
(Venom, Maniac) variable
EYES: Brown
HAIR: Black

HISTORY: After killing his abusive parents via arson, Lee Price spent five years as a ward of the state before enlisting with the U.S. Army and becoming a Ranger. A mine explosion cost him two fingers on his left hand and he was discharged, but was unable to find work and turned to crime. Price's life experience turned him into a pragmatic, scheming, and callous person. Taking a grunt job with the gang led by Black Cat (Felicia Hardy), Price bonded with the Venom symbiote — which was searching for a new host — during a confrontation with another gang, led by Tombstone (Lonnie Lincoln). Price killed everyone present — including childhood friend Tony Consiglio and a homeless man — to keep his new secret, hoping to gain prominence in Black Cat's gang with his hidden weapon; Price presumably used the symbiote to "re-create" his missing fingers. Despite Price's efforts, within days both Black Cat and the FBI learned his secret and the FBI's Anti-Symbiote Task Force, assisted by Spider-Man (Peter Parker), took the symbiote. Once released from the New York Corrections Supermax Facility for Superhuman Incarceration, Price attacked Mania (Andi Benton) and took her symbiote, naming himself Maniac. Maniac infected various villains with pieces of his new symbiote, taking control of their minds and calling them his "Inklings." With his new army, he enslaved Black Cat and her gang. Meanwhile, using a symbiote tracker to search for Mania's missing symbiote, Spider-Man and Anti-Venom ("Flash" Thompson) tracked Maniac. Though Anti-Venom freed Black Cat, Maniac enslaved Spider-Man and sent him out for supplies for his plan to enslave the five largest crime families in the world. Black Cat freed Spider-Man, and they teamed up with Benton, Anti-Venom, and Venom (Eddie Brock). Disguised as waiters, Maniac and his Inklings enslaved the crime families but were confronted by Spider-Man





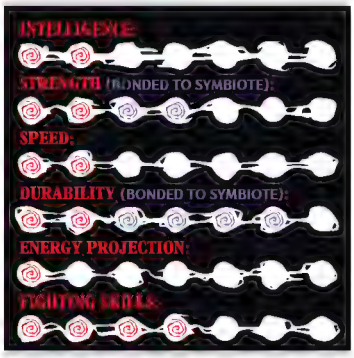
AS VENOM

AS MANIAC WITH INKLINGS

WEAKENED SYMBIOTE

and his allies, who were armed with an anti-symbiote serum. When his Inklings were freed Maniac called the slivers of his symbiote back to empower himself, growing to an enormous height, but was ultimately defeated by Anti-Venom, himself empowered by former Inkling antibodies. Imprisoned at Ryker's Island Penitentiary, Price wore his weakened symbiote as a Venom emblem on his chest, but serial killer symbiote host Carnage (Cletus Kasady) ripped Price's symbiote from him, apparently killing Price in the process.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: While bonded to the Venom symbiote, Price had superhuman strength (presumably lifting 11 tons) and durability, could cling to walls, shoot strands of the alien's substance as adhesive "webbing" from his wrists, camouflage himself, and negate Spider-Man's spider-sense. As Maniac, in addition to the "Venom" powers, Price could separate the symbiote and attach it to others to control their minds. Price had extensive Army Rangers training and combat experience, and could pilot a helicopter. Price previously wore a left glove with inserts to stand in for his missing fingers.



FIRST APPEARANCE: (Venom/Price) *Venom #1* (2017); (Maniac) *Amazing Spider-Man: Venom Inc. #1* (2018)

ART BY GERARDO SANDOVAL & RYAN STEGMAN

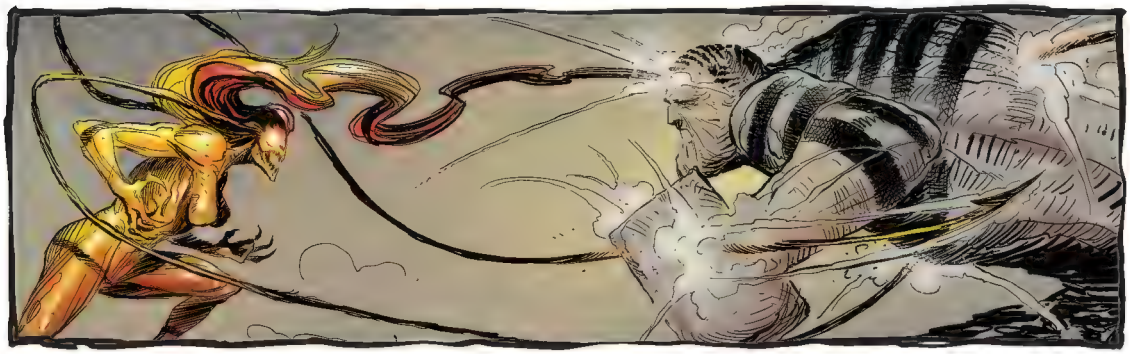
SCREAM

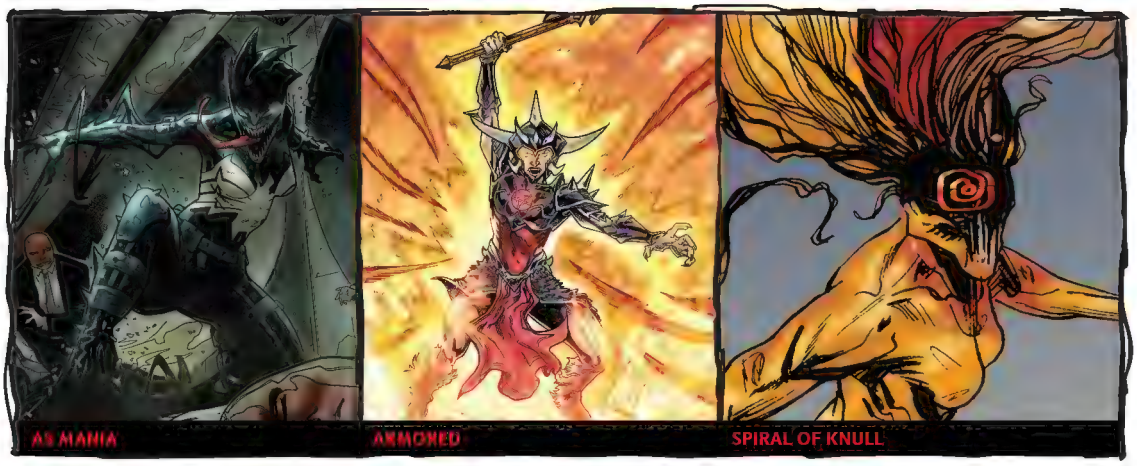
REAL NAME: Andrea "Andi" Benton
ALIASES: Formerly Mania
IDENTITY: Secret
OCCUPATION: Adventurer; former record store employee
CITIZENSHIP: USA
PLACE OF BIRTH: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
KNOWN RELATIVES: (Benton) Unidentified father (deceased), unidentified mother, Sarah (last name unrevealed, aunt, deceased); (Mania symbiote) Venom (genetic counterpart), various relations through Venom; (Scream symbiote) Venom ("progenitor"), Carnage, Sleeper ("siblings"), Agony, Lasher, Phage, Riot (collectively known as Hybrid, "siblings," apparently deceased), various relations through Carnage
GROUP AFFILIATION: Monsters of Evil (leader)
EDUCATION: High school (whether she graduated is unrevealed)
HEIGHT: 5'8"
WEIGHT: 140 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Black with dyed purple highlights

HISTORY: Abandoned by her mother at an early age, lackadaisical Andrea "Andi" Benton lived with her doting father in a modest apartment and attended high school. Initially dismissive and judgmental toward her new paraplegic downstairs neighbor and assistant gym coach, Eugene "Flash" Thompson, Benton showed surprising concern when she found him injured and without his wheelchair on the roof of their building after battling the vigilante Toxin (Eddie Brock) as his crime fighting, symbiotic alter ego Agent Venom. Soon after, Benton witnessed Thompson instinctively use his symbiote to punish a school bully, and his secret weighed heavily on her. When local crimelord Lord Ogre sent an unidentified man brainwashed to become a new Jack O'Lantern to attack their apartment building to get to Thompson, Benton helplessly watched him murder her father. Attempting to protect her, Thompson covered Benton with his symbiote. Thompson was unaware the symbiote secretly expelled a previously-absorbed clone of itself onto Benton; both Thompson and the symbiote were also unaware a Hell-Mark intended to be branded upon the Venom symbiote by the Hell-lord Mephisto some time before had been accidentally attached to the clone now on Benton. The bond between them was fast and aggressive, and Benton adapted to the symbiote with unnerving aptitude. After her father's funeral, Benton lived with her Aunt Sarah in Jenkintown, still under Thompson's watchful eye.

Yearning for vengeance, partially due to the Hell-Mark's corrupting influence, Benton adopted the name Mania and hunted Lord Ogre, despite Thompson's wishes. Mania confronted Lord Ogre at his penthouse and was attacked by Crossbones (Brock Rumlow) and Master Mayhem, who were working for Hydra's Department of Occult Armaments (D.O.A.) to claim Benton's Hell-Mark. Mayhem's demons killed Lord Ogre, but the Hell-Mark allowed Mania to command them, enabling her and Thompson to escape. Mania followed Thompson to a ruined casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, to bargain with the Hell-lord Mephisto. Benton learned the Hell-Mark made her a potential successor for Mephisto during a pending event called the Descent, and gave her control over the D.O.A.'s demonic Monsters of Evil; Mephisto refused to transfer the mark to Thompson, stating the original deal was with the symbiote.

The Hell-Mark burned through the symbiote, attaching itself to Benton, further accentuating her ruthlessness after Thompson's temporary departure from Earth with the Guardians of the Galaxy. Later, to quell the Hell-Mark's effects, Thompson injected Benton with a restorative elixir from the planet Wenb's Fountain of Purity. The power-hungry, former Venom symbiote host Lee Price later stole Benton's symbiote and, taking the

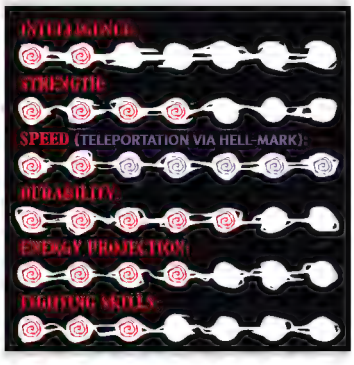




name Maniac, used it to enslave others as his "Inklings." Benton tracked Maniac to Karnelli's Scrapyard in the Bronx, New York, saving Thompson, now Anti-Venom, from incineration. Together with Anti-Venom, Spider-Man (Peter Parker), Black Cat (Felicia Hardy), and Venom (Eddie Brock), Benton freed Maniac's victims, but her symbiote remained with Price after his defeat. After the loss of her symbiote, Benton suffered from nightmares, hallucinations, anxiety, and phantom limb syndrome, but made friends to compensate. Sometime later, the symbiote-wearing serial killer Carnage (Cletus Kasady), began collecting codices, genetic imprints stored by symbiotes within current and former hosts' spines, to release the malevolent symbiote god, Knull, from his prison; during his efforts, he stalked Benton and killed Sarah. Terrified, Benton fled, summoning the Monsters of Evil and manifesting armor to face him. Carnage shredded the demons and broke her arm, but the Hell-Mark teleported Benton to New York, where she sought out Brock.

Knull awakened the Scream symbiote, still bonded to its original deceased host, Donna Diego, which arose from its shallow grave to serve him, soon abandoning the corpse for Patricia Robertson, former host to Venom's cloned symbiote. Scream pursued Benton, but occasionally Robertson was able to resist Knull's influence. Carnage brutally murdered the defiant Robertson and nearly killed Benton, but the Scream symbiote bonded with her and healed her. Benton, now Scream, escaped, returning later with reinforcements for a triumphant final battle. Afterward, a now-homeless Benton found respite at the F.E.A.S.T. (Food, Emergency Aid, Shelter, and Training) charity center, where she met May Parker (who was unknowingly the aunt of Spider-Man/Peter Parker). Though Benton had difficulty adjusting to the Scream symbiote, becoming aggressive and suicidal, the symbiote saved her repeatedly. Later, the ancient dragon-like Knull servitor Big Mother sent her minions to acquire the Scream symbiote, hoping to raise it as her daughter. During an attack at F.E.A.S.T., May saw Benton lose control of her symbiote. When Scream confronted Big Mother in her underwater dwelling, Big Mother tore the symbiote from Benton, who nearly drowned. The symbiote, though initially having relished Benton's anger, recognized Benton's growing love to be a more powerful emotion, and rescued her. Admitting all they had was each other, Benton accepted the symbiote as family, and although severely wounded, defeated Big Mother. Benton subsequently promised to earn May's trust by protecting F.E.A.S.T. and those that depended on it. Pushing everyone away for their safety and attempting to remain discreet, Scream investigated the disappearances of numerous homeless children, clashing with vigilantes Punisher (Frank Castle) and Sandman (William Baker), each also working to save the children; unlike Punisher, Scream refused to kill. An appreciative Detective Henley later offered Benton a role as a police informant, which she promptly rejected; Benton remained unaware the Punisher was secretly watching her.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: The Scream symbiote grants Benton superhuman strength (lifting 5 tons), durability, agility, endurance, and can heal her from minor to near-fatal injuries. It can shape-shift, taking on the appearance of any item of clothing, disguising her features, or rendering her invisible. Scream can use tendril-like hair to entangle or strangle her foes, has razor-sharp claws and teeth, can form fins and adapt to breathe underwater, and form wings for flight. The Scream symbiote is vulnerable to sonics, and can be swayed by the symbiote god Knull's influence. Benton's Hell-Mark enables her to control demons, and summon/command the Monsters of Evil, manifest armor, teleport, project or channel Hellfire through weapons or her mouth, and protects her from intense heat and flame. The Mania symbiote's powers, abilities, and weaknesses were nearly identical to the Scream symbiote.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Venom #31*; (first name revealed) *Venom #32*; (as Mania) *Venom #38*; (surname revealed) *Venom #39* (all 2013); (as Scream) *Absolute Carnage: Scream #3* (2019)

ART BY ALBERTO ALBURQUERQUE, GARRY BROWN, KIM JACINTO & CHRIS MOONEYHAM

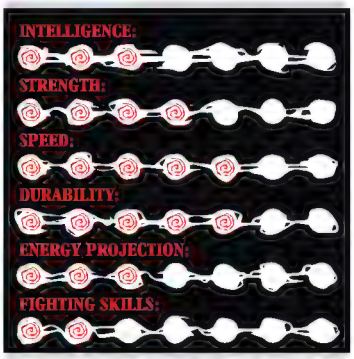
SLEEPER

REAL NAME: Sleeper
ALIASES: None
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Explorer, guardian
CITIZENSHIP: Unrevealed
PLACE OF BIRTH: New York City, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: Venom ("progenitor"), Carnage, Scream ("siblings"), Agony, Lasher, Phage, Riot (collectively known as Hybrid, "siblings," apparently deceased), various relations through Carnage
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
EDUCATION: No formal education, knowledge absorbed from various hosts
HEIGHT: 8' (variable)
WEIGHT: Variable
EYES: Solid red (no visible pupils, usually four eyes)
HAIR: None

HISTORY: When the Venom symbiote birthed another spawn, Venom host Eddie Brock protected both symbiotes from the Anti-Symbiote Task Force and Scorpion (Mac Gargan), who hoped to claim the offspring as his own. After Alchemax Laboratory's Dr. Steve tricked them into believing it had been a stillbirth, Brock arranged to keep the offspring in the Alchemax lab. Shortly after Brock learned Alchemax was performing invasive tests on the offspring, alien Kree warrior Tel-Kar, apparently the Venom symbiote's first host, stole the Venom symbiote from Brock. The offspring bonded with Brock to rescue its parent and joined forces with the Skrull War-Bride M'lanz (who was hunting Tel-Kar). They tracked Tel-Kar to the D'karr Nebula where the Venom symbiote ultimately escaped Tel-Kar's control and rejoined Brock. After returning to Earth, Brock found Tel-Kar in his apartment threatening to destroy humanity with a biological weapon. The offspring lobotomized Tel-Kar, took his body as its passive host, and left to explore the cosmos. When Tel-Kar was mortally wounded on an alien planet, the offspring fed on the dying Kree's fluids and experienced his memories. After Tel-Kar's death, the offspring was disturbed by the lonely silence and drifted through space until the symbiote hive mind drew it to Klyntar, the planet of the symbiotes, where it learned of the symbiote god Knull's existence and the threat he posed to Earth. After taking the name Sleeper, the offspring returned to Earth to oppose Knull's minions there. Sleeper shed Tel-Kar's corpse to bond with Dylan, the alleged son of Eddie Brock, but could not, apparently due to the boy's unique biology. Using newfound powers over symbiotes, Dylan forcibly "piloted" Sleeper, in the form of a wolf, turning its saliva to napalm to defeat the symbiote-controlled Maker (Earth-1610's Reed Richards); these events allowed Sleeper to learn an unrevealed true nature of Dylan. Sleeper vowed to protect Dylan, accompanying him in the form of a housecat. Sleeper was later alarmed to learn Dylan was secretly keeping a piece of a symbiote; Sleeper urged Dylan to reveal this, his powers, and his true nature to Brock.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Sleeper is capable of chemokinesis, the ability to create any chemical from itself in either liquid or aerosol forms, including napalm and chemicals that allow contact-free communication, euphoria, confusion, or sleep. Once it has "learned" a being's biology, it can synthesize a variety of pheromones, tranquilizers, and stimulants specific to it, such as Badoon acid and Brood pheromones. It can "feel" things that are cloaked, survive in the vacuum of space, fly interstellar distances rapidly using rocket boosters it "grows" from its back, and become effectively invisible by camouflaging itself while secreting a pheromone that confuses the senses. Presumably, Sleeper's enhanced strength, durability, and endurance will increase as it ages.

IN CAT FORM



IN HUMANOID FORM, SYNTHESIZING BADOON ACID

FIRST APPEARANCE: (Referenced) *Venom #164* (2018); (spawned) *Venom #165* (2018); (name revealed) *Venom: First Host #4* (2018); (name used) *Venom #17* (2019)

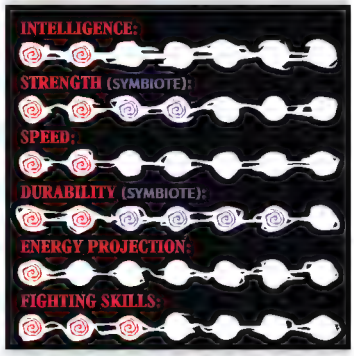
ART BY IBAN COELLO & JUAN GEDEON

REX STRICKLAND

REAL NAME: (Human) Rex Strickland; (symbiote) unrevealed
ALIASES: (Both) Tyrannosaurus; (symbiote) impersonated Rex Strickland
IDENTITY: (Both) Secret
OCCUPATION: (Human) assassin; former soldier; (symbiote) former S.H.I.E.L.D. agent
CITIZENSHIP: (Human) USA; (symbiote) unrevealed
PLACE OF BIRTH: (Both) unrevealed
KNOWN RELATIVES: (Human) none; (symbiote) Grendel (progenitor), Big Mother (supposed "grandmother")
GROUP AFFILIATION: (Human) Sym-Soldier Program; formerly U.S. Army; (symbiote) formerly S.H.I.E.L.D., Sym-Soldier Program
EDUCATION: (Both) unrevealed
HEIGHT: (Human) 5'8"; (symbiote) variable
WEIGHT: (Human) 150 lbs.; (symbiote) variable
EYES: (Human) brown; (symbiote) variable
HAIR: (Human) black; (symbiote) variable

HISTORY: When a sniper shot Rex Strickland during the Vietnam War, Project S.H.I.E.L.D. (which preceded the peacekeeping S.H.I.E.L.D. by decades) chose the dying soldier to lead the Sym-Soldier Program, a government project to create super-soldiers by bonding humans to alien symbiotes taken from the dragon-like Grendel. The symbiote-empowered Strickland, codenamed Tyrannosaurus, became a government assassin. While deployed with the other Sym-Soldiers to destroy a Vietnamese weapons depot, the symbiotes became dominant and violently erratic due to their connection to Grendel, who was undergoing painful Project S.H.I.E.L.D. tests. The Sym-Soldiers began slaughtering everyone present, prompting Project S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Nick Fury to send the mutant Logan (James Howlett) and a Life-Model Decoy (LMD) of himself to regain control of the soldiers. His symbiote leaving him, Strickland aided Logan and the LMD against his teammates until the LMD activated self-destruct protocols, forcing Strickland to re-bond to his remorseful symbiote. Strickland hurled Logan to safety before perishing in the explosion. The mourning symbiote assumed Strickland's identity and joined S.H.I.E.L.D., secretly appropriating confiscated weapons over several decades. Following S.H.I.E.L.D.'s collapse, the symbiote (as Strickland) obtained the assistance of Venom (Eddie Brock) in liberating the cryogenically frozen Sym-Soldiers, inadvertently also freeing Grendel. Venom ultimately exposed the symbiote's true identity shortly before they merged to combat Grendel; "Strickland" subsequently sacrificed itself in an attempt to immolate Grendel.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: The human Rex Strickland was a highly trained soldier and assassin, adept with military weapons. While bonded to his symbiote, Strickland had superhuman strength (lifting roughly 800 lbs.) and durability. Strickland's symbiote could alter its amorphous body at will to camouflage or appear as others. Like most symbiotes, it had a weakness to fire and high frequency sonics. As Rex Strickland, the symbiote had access to confiscated S.H.I.E.L.D. weapons including advanced firearms and sonic grenades.



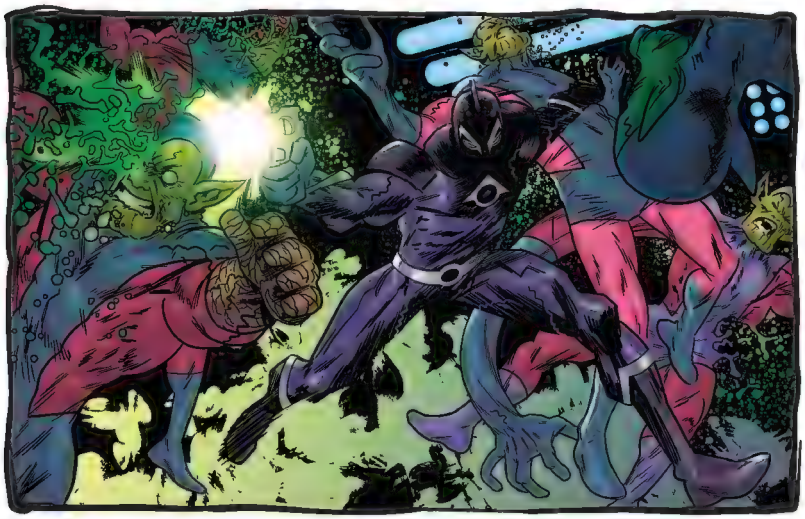
FIRST APPEARANCE: (Symbiote as Strickland, photo of real Strickland) *Venom #1* (2018); (real Strickland and symbiote's true form both fully seen) *Venom #2* (2018)

ART BY JUANAN RAMIREZ & RYAN STEGMAN

TEL-KAR

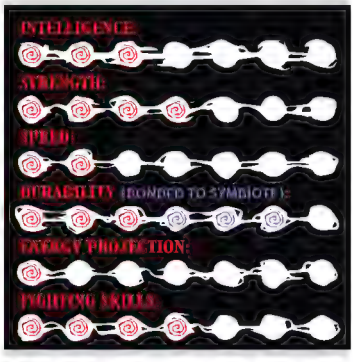
REAL NAME: Tel-Kar
ALIASES: "Papa Smurf," impersonated M'lanz; possessed by Sleeper
IDENTITY: No dual identity
OCCUPATION: Former fugitive, Skrull soldier (infiltrator), Kree undercover operative, Kree soldier
CITIZENSHIP: Kree Empire, with a criminal record
PLACE OF BIRTH: Unrevealed
KNOWN RELATIVES: None
GROUP AFFILIATION: Formerly Kree military (Lesser Magellanic Special Tactics Division, Fleet of the Third Spiral Arm), Skrull military (infiltrator)
EDUCATION: Kree military training with specialist training to control symbiotes
HEIGHT: 6'4"
WEIGHT: 250 lbs.
EYES: Blue
HAIR: White

HISTORY: During the Kree-Skrull War, Tel-Kar, a Kree soldier in the Lesser Magellanic Special Tactics Division, was selected to bond with a shape-shifting alien symbiote. He underwent experimental gene therapies to make him an ideal host, with implants altering his body chemistry to increase the symbiote's reliance on him, physical training to resist a symbiote's psychoactive effects, and psychological training to manipulate its memories. Mimicking a Skrull, he infiltrated enemy forces, sabotaged missions, stole classified information, and performed assassinations. In case he was captured, a cover story was concocted, with fellow Kree told he had deserted. Eventually he learned of a secret Skrull weapon; a programmable plague able to target specific species. Though the Skrulls had declined to unleash it, even against their mortal enemies, Tel-Kar believed it could win the war if turned against the Skrulls and sought to inform his Kree superiors. Before he could, he blew his cover to prevent the massacre of Kree refugees. In case of capture, Tel-Kar locked away most of the secrets he had learned within the symbiote's subconscious. He entrusted the refugees to return the symbiote to Hala while he bought them time. After they departed, Skrull Warbrides led by M'lanz captured Tel-Kar. He spent years in Skrull custody, undergoing enhanced interrogation. Escaping to Hala, he found a new regime in charge who deemed him a traitor and handed him back to the Skrulls as a war criminal. Eventually escaping again, Tel-Kar wandered the galaxy until hearing of the exploits of Venom, a symbiote bonded to an Earth human named Eddie Brock. Tel-Kar went to Earth,



pursued by M'lanz. Finding the symbiote unwilling to leave Brock, Tel-Kar forced its capitulation by threatening its newborn spawn, later named Sleeper, and with his memories restored, departed for a Skrull Military Installation in the D'karr Nebula to steal the plague. With M'lanz and Brock, now bonded to Sleeper, close behind, Tel-Kar slaughtered the facility's staff and alerted the Kree to its location, believing delivering the bioweapon would restore his status. With Sleeper's aid, the Venom symbiote rebelled against Tel-Kar's control, prompting him to burn it off himself, leaving him scarred. The Kree warships opened fire on the facility, still viewing Tel-Kar as a traitor and preferring to destroy the weapon. Brock, the symbiotes, and M'lanz escaped, wrongly believing Tel-Kar slain in the facility's destruction, but he returned to Earth to punish Brock for his interference by using his remaining plague sample against humanity. Sleeper stopped Tel-Kar by bonding with and lobotomizing him. Piloting the Kree's living but mindless form, Sleeper departed to explore space. When Tel-Kar was slain on an unidentified alien world, Sleeper consumed his fluids, gaining his memories. Later, upon learning that the symbiote god Knull threatened Earth, Sleeper returned to warn his friends, but was captured by the Maker (Earth-1610's Reed Richards) and ripped from Tel-Kar's corpse, which was presumably destroyed thereafter.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: Naturally stronger than humans, the Kree Tel-Kar was also a skilled combatant, proficient with firearms and bladed weapons. He had undergone various genetic and technological modifications to increase his control over symbiotes. Using his symbiote, he could create weapons, his strength, agility, durability, and endurance were boosted to unspecified levels, and he could integrate with technology, operating it as extensions of his own body. He could use its shape-shifting abilities to assume the appearance of different clothing, armor, and individuals of at least vaguely similar height and build, including those of other species.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Venom: First Host #1* (2018)

ART BY MARK BAGLEY, IBAN COELLO, JUAN GEDEON & RON LIM

VENOM

REAL NAME: Edward "Eddie" Charles Allan Brock
ALIASES: "The Lethal Protector," Mr. Sym, Toxin, Anti-Venom, Edwin Brock, Sister Edwina, Rad Eddie
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Vigilante; former reporter, government operative, homeless shelter attendant
CITIZENSHIP: USA, with a criminal record (pardoned)
PLACE OF BIRTH:
New York City, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: (Brock) Dylan Brock (alleged son), Carl Brock (father), Jamie Brock (mother, deceased), Martha (aunt, presumably deceased), Anne Weying (ex-wife, deceased); (symbiote) Carnage ("offspring," deceased), Agony, Lasher, Phage, Riot (collectively known as Hybrid, "offspring," apparently deceased), Scream, Sleeper ("offspring"), Dylan Brock (alleged son)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Formerly FBI, Savage Six, Sinister Six
EDUCATION: B.A. in journalism from Empire State University

HEIGHT: 6'3" (variable)
WEIGHT: 260 lbs. (variable)
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Reddish-blond

HISTORY: As a teenager, Eddie Brock killed a child while driving drunk; his father, Carl, spent much of the family fortune to keep Brock out of

AS TOXIN

jail and avoid any repercussions. Resentful of how his father had browbeaten him into complying, the two became estranged. Brock eventually left his past behind and became a reporter, but when Spider-Man (Peter Parker) defeated the true serial killer Sin-Eater (Stan Carter), Brock's exclusive interview with Emil Gregg, a man claiming to be the Sin-Eater, was discredited. The revelation destroyed Brock's career and his marriage to lawyer Anne Weying, which ignited his hatred of Spider-Man. During a chance encounter, Brock joined with Spider-Man's discarded alien symbiote costume to become Venom and bedeviled the wall-crawler for years before reaching an uneasy truce with him and becoming a vigilante lethal protector of the innocent. Meanwhile, the symbiote, terrified of being abandoned again, altered Brock's memories to make him believe it was suppressing his cancer, even though Brock was cancer-free, and further stoked his fears by making him remember a fictitious sister Mary and unidentified uncle who had died of cancer. At various times, Venom's symbiote spawned offspring; one of them bonded with serial killer Cletus Kasady to become the monstrous Carnage. At some point, Brock and Weying reunited and somehow conceived a child, though Weying alluded to no traditional conception occurring;

AS TOXIN, WITH FBI

BONDED TO SLEEPER

somehow the child also received genetic material from the symbiote. Keeping her pregnancy secret from Brock, Weying left the boy (named Dylan) with his grandfather, Carl; still traumatized from her brief bond with the alien, Weying later died by suicide. Some time later, during a religious awakening, Brock gave up his symbiote; it passed to the criminal Scorpion (Mac Gargan), then government super-soldier Agent Venom ("Flash" Thompson). Meanwhile, Brock, still believing he had cancer, met philanthropist Martin Li (secretly the Chinatown crime lord Mister Negative), who possessed a healing touch; when he tried to heal Brock, his power supercharged the symbiote traces still in his body, giving him the ability to transform into the antibody-powered Anti-Venom. Brock was soon shattered to learn that Li was Mister Negative. Brock set out to take down Negative, and with the help of Spider-Man and the vigilante Wraith (Yuri Watanabe), he exposed Li's identity to the public, forcing the crime lord underground.

Soon afterward, the Jackal (Miles Warren) and Queen (Ana Soria) infected Manhattan with a genetically engineered plague that transformed its residents into monstrous spider-creatures. Believing he was on a divine mission, Anti-Venom took up residence in the Our Lady of Saints Church, using his powers to heal victims. Before long, Agent Venom battled and apprehended him; although he was supposed to bring Brock in peacefully, the Venom symbiote reacted violently to Anti-Venom and attacked him. Nevertheless, Agent Venom delivered Anti-Venom to Horizon Labs, where Brock was willingly drained fully of all his antibodies to formulate a successful cure, leaving him powerless again. Inspired by his encounter with Venom, Brock began hunting other symbiote hosts, apparently killing Hybrid (Scott Washington) and Scream (Donna Diego) before the Crime-Master (Bennett Brant) captured him and bonded him with the Toxin symbiote. Agreeing to work with the crime lord to get his revenge on Thompson, he joined Crime-Master's Savage Six. In a clash with Agent Venom, Brock and his symbiote were seemingly incinerated; in reality, both survived and slunk off to heal while Thompson defeated Crime-Master and the rest of the Six.

After recovering, Brock followed Thompson to Philadelphia; the two clashed, but had to join forces to battle the biomechanical Symbiote Slayers. Seeing Thompson act heroically, Brock was willing to believe Thompson had avoided being corrupted by his symbiote, and the two reached an uneasy truce. Keeping an eye on Thompson, Brock became a vigilante in Philadelphia until the FBI apprehended him and forcibly recruited him into an anti-Carnage task force; the FBI inoculated Brock with drugs that blocked him from becoming Toxin until his handlers allowed him. Brock quickly developed an antagonistic relationship with the task force's leader, Claire Dixon, but still joined her, ex-astronaut John Jameson, and Carnage-attack survivor Manuela Calderon in setting up an ambush for Carnage in a West Virginia mine. However, they ran afoul of a group of *Darkhold* cultists, who believed Carnage was prophesied to release the elder god Chthon. Brock and his team barely escaped with their lives, and Carnage fled with the evil *Darkhold* tome. Cut loose by the FBI, Brock and the others joined forces with *Darkhold* hunter Victoria Montesi and pursued Carnage to Indonesia, where they met Jubulile Van Scotter, a young South African sailor who had survived an encounter with Kasady and maintained a psychic link with him; however, they lost Dixon, whom Kasady captured and transformed into his symbiotic minion Raze. Tracking Kasady to an island in the Timor Sea, Brock gave the Toxin symbiote to Van Scotter to help combat Kasady's influence over her; she used it

to defeat the risen Chthon, but it was apparently destroyed in the process, leaving Brock alone again. Kasady meanwhile slew Raze when she broke from his control, before Montesi subdued him using the evil *Darkhold* tome.

Sometime after the Venom symbiote was taken from Thompson by FBI Agent Wambaugh while attempting to capture it for the U.S. government, Brock returned to service with the FBI in time to help capture the Venom symbiote's new host, criminal Lee Price. With Price separated from the alien, Brock freed the symbiote from captivity and bonded with it willingly, becoming Venom once more. He resumed his vigilante career; however, the symbiote began acting erratically, due to the FBI's symbiote-blocking drugs still in Brock's system. While looking into attacks by dinosaur-man Vincent Stegron and his mutated acolytes, Brock's investigation took him to Alchemax, a chemical firm headed by Liz Allan. He offered to help her find Stegron, and to allow the company's scientists to study him. Soon, Alchemax scientist Dr. Steve discovered the source of the symbiote's problems and devised a drug to treat it. Brock eventually defeated Stegron, but found that his dinosaur-men now hailed him as their savior, and he protected them from aggrieved subterranean Moloids and Kraven the Hunter (Sergei Kravinoff). Unbeknownst to Brock, however, the symbiote was undergoing another change — it was about to spawn.

Venom joined with a number of symbiote hosts from across the Multiverse to journey to Earth-22249 and battle the Poisons, a race of alien parasites that consumed symbiotes and their hosts, transforming their corpses into powerful warriors; Venom and his allies returned to their home realities after apparently defeating the Poisons. Before long, Lee Price escaped from jail, stealing the symbiote of Thompson's former sidekick Mania (Andi Benton) and bonding with it to become Maniac. He began taking over New York's underworld by turning criminals into his symbiotic "Inklings," prompting Thompson to try and reclaim his symbiote from Brock; the conflicted symbiote briefly connected to both men. Misinterpreting the ensuing struggle in Alchemax's labs, Spider-Man doused them both in an Alchemax-created Anti-Venom serum, transforming Thompson into the new Agent Anti-Venom and helping resolve some of Brock's chemical imbalances. The two joined forces with Spider-Man, Black Cat (Felicia Hardy), and Benton to defeat Price.

UNDER KNULL'S INFLUENCE

After bounty hunters attacked the spacefaring Starjammers with weaponized symbiotes, the time-displaced original X-Men sought Venom's help; he refused, so they abducted him for their rescue mission anyway. After the Starjammers were saved, the X-Men and Venom returned to Earth to find it in the throes of an active Poison invasion; soon, the Poisons captured and infected Carnage to spearhead their invasion force. Eventually, Venom, the X-Men, and Spider-Man were able to stem the invasion, destroying the Poison Queen and killing most of the Poisons.

Pursued by a government task force led by an apparently resurrected Claire Dixon and the Scorpion, the symbiote produced its offspring, Sleeper — but Dr. Steve fooled Dixon into believing Sleeper was not a threat by claiming that the new symbiote had been stillborn. Venom also helped his old foe Spider-Man in his struggle against Norman Osborn, who had bonded with the Carnage symbiote — or a "pruning" of the symbiote stolen from the sub-aquatic Lock Box facility — to become the Red Goblin; as a sign of the trust that had formed between the two, Brock even lent

his symbiote to Spider-Man, who used it to defeat Osborn. Soon afterward, Tel-Kar, the deranged Kree warrior who apparently had been Venom's first host, traveled to Earth and stole the symbiote from Brock, hoping to use it to reclaim an anti-Skrull bioweapon. Bonding with the Sleeper symbiote and allying with the Skrull warbride M'lanz, Brock chased Tel-Kar into space, where he retrieved his symbiote and destroyed the bioweapon; Tel-Kar followed him to Earth, but Sleeper lobotomized the Kree warrior and used his mindless body as its host. It left Brock to explore the stars.

Soon, Brock's symbiote began behaving erratically again, this time not from a chemical imbalance, but from the malign influence of the ancient symbiote god Knull; it began negatively affecting Brock's writing, as well, and he was fired from the tabloid *Fact Sheet*. During one such spell, when his symbiote went out of control and began speaking an ancient symbiote language, Venom encountered Rex Strickland, a man claiming to be a Vietnam War-era symbiote-bonded super-soldier; in fact, Strickland had died in Vietnam, and his surviving symbiote, a fragment of the ancient dragon-like Grendel, had assumed his form and identity. "Strickland" recruited Brock to help rescue his old Sym-Soldier squadmates, who had been placed in stasis and were being transported to a facility to be exterminated following the peacekeeping S.H.I.E.L.D.'s shutdown. However, "Strickland" was unaware that Grendel was also being transported in the same vehicle, and during Brock's rescue attempt, the massive creature escaped. Venom confronted the monster and encountered Knull for the first time, who spoke to him through Grendel. In the presence of the ancient creature, Venom manifested working wings, and used them to battle the monstrous entity. When the Strickland-symbiote sacrificed itself by pulling Grendel into a blast furnace, Venom held the doors shut in an attempt to kill Grendel. However, Brock's own symbiote sustained so much damage in the process that it lost many of its cognitive functions, lapsing into an animalistic state; despite "Strickland" and Venom's sacrifices, a small portion of Grendel secretly survived and was collected by the maniacal Maker (Earth-1610's Reed Richards).

Later traveling to San Francisco, Brock encountered Carl and Dylan; Carl claimed Dylan was Brock's half brother, and Brock soon became aware that Carl

was abusing Dylan. There, the Maker captured Brock, hoping to unlock his symbiote's secrets. While undergoing the Maker's procedures, Brock's mind interlinked with his symbiote's, bringing him to the realization that the symbiote had altered his memories, revealing the false deceased sister and uncle and that Dylan was apparently his son; Brock kept the latter revelation from Dylan. Separated from Brock, the symbiote drove Carl away, leaving Dylan in Brock's custody. The symbiote left, believing it was harming Brock more than helping him.

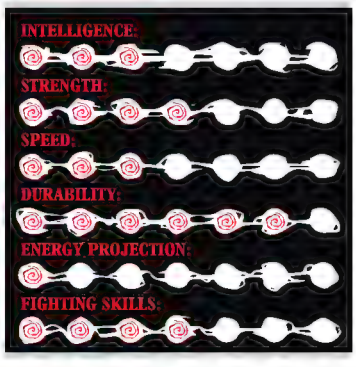
The symbiote helped a number of savage heroes battle the sorcerer Kulan Gath, and then aided the Avengers during Malekith's attack on the Earth. Meanwhile, Brock and his son were caught in New York City as Malekith's armies besieged the city. A Dark Elf witch approached Brock with a mystical Dreamstone, which allowed him to construct a magical replica of the symbiote; although the witch had hoped to recruit Brock into Malekith's army, he instead attacked her, and used the Dreamstone against Malekith's forces. The witch empowered his foe Jack O'Lantern with a Dreamstone as well; Brock overcame his own Dreamstone's corrupting influence, using it to empower a crowd of civilians to defeat the villain before rejecting and discarding it.

Meanwhile, a Knull-worshipping cult stole the Maker's portion of Grendel and bonded it with Carnage's corpse, restoring and greatly empowering him. Carnage formulated a plan to collect the genetic imprints left in each current and former symbiote host's spine (known as a codex), and to use them all to awaken Knull, bringing him to Earth to unleash his murderous terror on humanity. He hunted and attacked Brock, but the Venom symbiote rejoined Brock at the last moment to save his life. Learning of Carnage's plans, Venom sought help from Spider-Man and the Maker, the latter of whom had invented a device to safely extract codices. Needing a test subject for the device, Venom and Spider-Man went to Ravencroft to collect Norman Osborn but were too late to stop Carnage from putting Osborn under his control. Soon, the city fell into chaos, as Carnage and his minions hunted former symbiote hosts for their codices. Several other heroes joined forces with Venom and used the machine to extract their codices; during a confrontation with Carnage, Brock's symbiote abandoned him, believing he wouldn't have the ruthlessness to kill Carnage, and bonded with the Hulk (Bruce Banner) instead. Carnage defeated the Venom-Hulk and absorbed the Venom symbiote into himself; to fight back, Brock bonded with the heroes' extracted codices. With Carnage in his grasp, but Dylan in Carnage's, Brock was given a choice — absorb the Carnage symbiote into himself, knowing that the codices Carnage had already consumed would awaken Knull, or allow Kasady to kill his son. He chose the former, apparently returning Kasady to the grave and bonding with the combined Venom-Carnage symbiote — but not before Dylan learned that he allegedly was Brock's son, changing the tenor of their relationship for a time.

Seeking to destroy the Carnage symbiote within him, in which Kasady's deranged personality still lingered, Brock traveled to Isla de Huesos, an abandoned island where he had once dwelled. Carnage soon attacked Brock, who, despite cutting off his own left hand to get away, was overtaken. With Brock in peril, Dylan used strange, undefined powers over symbiotes to seemingly destroy Carnage; however, unbeknownst to Brock, it survived and apparently claimed a shark as its host. Later, during an encounter with the Maker and the armored, vengeance-seeking Virus (Mac Gargan), Venom and Dylan were transported to a Earth-1051, an alternate Earth dominated by the symbiote overlord Codex (that reality's Dylan Brock). The Brocks aided in Codex's defeat, then had to wait over a year for the completion of the technology that could return them home. During that time, Brock's missing hand was reinstated, apparently through enhanced abilities the symbiote gained due to exposure to that reality's hive mind.

NOTE: *In light of the revelation that Brock's sister was a deception created by the symbiote, the truth about the comatose Mary Brock Venom learned of in* Nova *#6 (1999) remains unrevealed.*

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES (ABRIDGED): **Eddie Brock is bonded to an alien symbiote that increases his strength (lifting approximately 11 tons), durability, and endurance. It typically also manifests sharp claws and teeth, and a long, prehensile tongue. It can generate tendrils and organic webbing, change its appearance and render itself nearly invisible, and can heal Brock's injuries and animate his body when he is unconscious. It is bulletproof, and can resist most toxins. It has achieved powered flight via large, dragon-like wings. It eliminates waste by excreting a green, viscous substance through its mouth. Brock is a skilled reporter and experienced brawler, and is in excellent physical condition. When he was bonded to Sleeper, Brock had enhanced camouflage abilities, and could emit a variety of pheromones, tranquilizers, and stimulants. He briefly made use of a Dreamstone, a mystical Dark Elf artifact capable of translating dreams into reality; he used it to construct a suit of armor similar to his symbiote. While bonded to a hybrid-codex symbiote, Brock possessed some of the abilities of Captain America (Steve Rogers), Hawkeye (Clint Barton), the Thing (Ben Grimm), and Wolverine (James Howlett). At various times, Brock has used a variety of high-tech and improvised anti-symbiote weapons.**



FIRST APPEARANCE: (Venom, partial) *Web of Spider-Man #18* (1986); (Venom, full) *Amazing Spider-Man #299* (1988); (Venom, identified) *Amazing Spider-Man #300* (1988); (Anti-Venom) *Amazing Spider-Man #562* (2008); (Toxin) *Venom #17* (2012)

ART BY MARK BAGLEY, IBAN COELLO, MIKE PERKINS, DECLAN SHALVEY & RYAN STEGMAN

ANNE WEYING

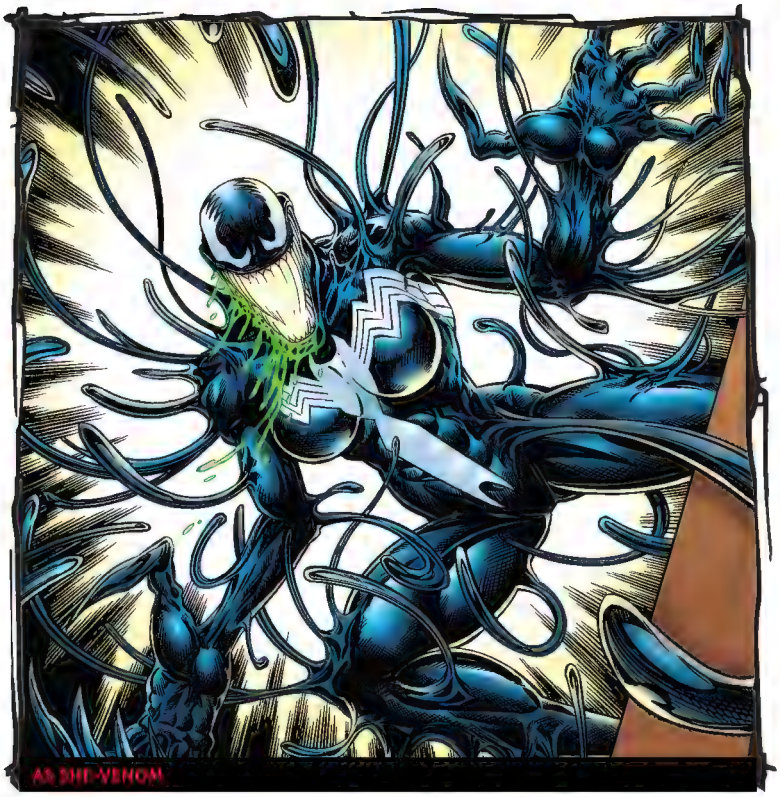
REAL NAME: Anne "Annie" Weying
ALIASES: She-Venom, Anne Brock
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Lawyer
CITIZENSHIP: USA
PLACE OF BIRTH: Flatbush, Brooklyn, New York City, New York
KNOWN RELATIVES: Dylan Brock (son), Eddie Brock (Venom, ex-husband)
GROUP AFFILIATION: None
EDUCATION: J.D. in law from unidentified university, unspecified undergraduate degree from Empire State University
HEIGHT: (Weying) 5'9" (She-Venom) variable
WEIGHT: (Weying) 140 lbs. (She-Venom) variable
EYES: Blue
HAIR: Brown (dyed blond)

WITH DYLAN BROCK

HISTORY: After enrolling at Empire State University, Anne Weying met Eddie Brock, a compulsive liar, who convinced Weying he was lost and asked her to help him find his off-campus apartment. Wandering into a dangerous neighborhood, Brock eventually admitted to lying about being lost so he could spend time with her. Attacked by muggers, Weying was knocked out; in an attempt to save himself Brock offered Weying to the thugs. However, the hero Spider-Man (Peter Parker) happened by and beat up the attackers and left; Brock took credit for saving Weying and she began to fall for Brock. They eventually married and Brock became an intern at the *Daily Globe*, although Weying was under the impression that he was a junior reporter. When Brock lucked into a series of exclusive articles about the serial killer Sin-Eater, Weying was delighted to see his articles on the front page of the *Globe*, but soon became concerned as Brock became obsessed with his job. When Spider-Man revealed the true Sin-Eater (Stan Carter), Brock's Sin-Eater (Emil Gregg) was exposed as a copycat and he was fired from the *Globe*. Brock became psychologically unstable, fixating on Spider-Man and obsessively lifting weights. Saddened by the deterioration of their relationship and disgusted with Brock's inability to take responsibility for his actions, Weying served Brock with divorce papers, unaware he had recently bonded with an alien symbiote that was also fixated on Spider-Man; together they would soon become the villainous Venom.

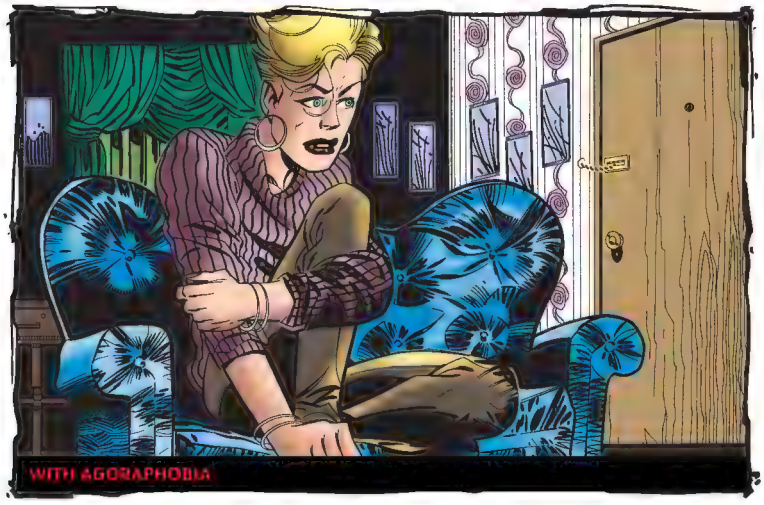
Years later and now a lawyer, Weying had become guarded in her personal life, not wanting to be known as "Venom's ex-wife." After learning of her, Spider-Man asked for Weying's help when Venom abducted Peter Parker's "parents" (actually synthetic impostors created by an insane Harry Osborn); she told him Brock likely took them to the Thrill World amusement park in Brooklyn, where they used to go on dates. Wanting to help, Weying also went there but her life was threatened by a collapsing Ferris wheel damaged by Venom while battling Spider-Man. Spider-Man helped Venom save Weying, and she convinced Brock to drop his vendetta against the hero, inspiring Venom to become a vigilante protector of innocent people.

Later, Attorney F. Bennet Field hired Weying as a legal assistant to help defend video game magnate Fordham Rhodes after an employee hacked into a prison computer to beta test a game based on symbiote-powered serial killer Carnage (Cletus Kasady), actions that inadvertently allowed Carnage to escape. However, a religious extremist Sin-Eater (Michael G. Engelschwert) attacked the trio, injuring Weying and killing Rhodes and Field. Following Weying to the hospital, Sin-Eater failed to kill her thanks to Venom's intervention. After Sin-Eater escaped, Venom brought Weying to his subterranean hideout, where Brock ordered his symbiote to bond with Weying and heal her injuries. When later attacked by a pair of predatory criminals, the symbiote controlled Weying and slaughtered the thugs. When Brock reclaimed the symbiote, Weying awoke and was horrified by the massacre. After fleeing to her apartment, Weying was met by an unidentified, deranged woman who blamed Venom for emotional trauma her daughter Kirstin suffered when Kirstin's boyfriend Clive was paralyzed during a confrontation with Venom; she abducted Weying to use as bait for Venom so she could kill him. Converging at Weying's apartment, Kirstin chastised her mother for using violence to solve problems, Weying hit Kirstin's mother with a lamp, ending her threat. After an encounter with a



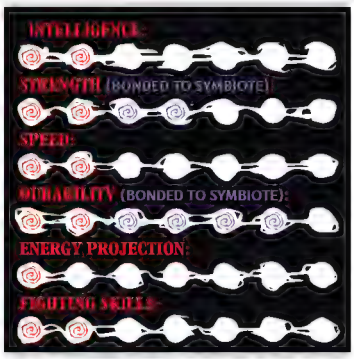
symbiote-possessed, vampiric Rune of Reality-93060, Brock swore to Weying to always keep her safe, and the pair once again became romantically involved.

Later still, the NYPD's Venom Task Force took Weying into custody, using her to lure Venom into the open. When Brock called her apartment, the call was forwarded to police HQ. Sensing something wrong, Brock sent his symbiote through the phone lines and connected minds with Weying, who went into an ecstatic state. Learning her location, Venom rescued her but when they reached the roof, Weying refused to go any farther. The arrival of Spider-Man (Peter Parker's clone Ben Reilly) interrupted their argument, but Weying hit Spider-Man in the head with a pipe during a subsequent brawl so Venom could flee; police arrested Weying for aiding Venom's escape. Weying used her phone call to tell Brock not to rescue her, but he still sent the symbiote through phone lines so it could bond with her again; as Weying escaped, reporter Trish Tilby named her "She-Venom." Fleeing to Thrill World, She-Venom battled drug dealers before returning the symbiote to Brock. Declaring Brock addicted to the symbiote and not wanting to become addicted herself, Weying told him to stay away until he ended his renewed feud with Spider-Man and was free of the symbiote; presumably the police dropped the charges against Weying. However, she soon discovered she was pregnant, apparently having conceived a child with Brock and, somehow, the symbiote; despite this Weying alluded to no traditional conception occurring.



Weying gave birth to the baby, which she named Dylan. Traumatized by her time with the symbiote and not trusting herself or Brock to raise the child, an unhinged Weying gave Dylan to Brock's father, Carl, swearing him to secrecy, then became an agoraphobic recluse. Brock later visited Weying hoping to rekindle their relationship, but when she saw Spider-Man swing by she mistakenly believed he was the symbiote coming to reclaim her. When Venom departed to attack Spider-Man for "bugging" her, Weying committed suicide by throwing herself out of her high-rise window. She was later buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens, New York.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES: As She-Venom, Weying had superhuman strength (lifting up to 11 tons) and durability, sharp claws and teeth, could cling to walls, shoot strands of the alien's substance as adhesive "webbing" from her wrists or as tendrils from her body, camouflage herself, and negate Spider-Man's spider-sense. Weying was a competent lawyer.



FIRST APPEARANCE: *Amazing Spider-Man #375* (1993); (She-Venom) *Venom: Sinner Takes All #2* (1995); (She-Venom, identified) *Venom: Along Came a Spider #2* (1996)

ART BY JOSHUA CASSARA, ERIK LARSEN & GREG LUZNIAK

WRAITH

REAL NAME: Formerly Zak-Del
ALIASES: Formerly Pale One, Gray Rider, Wind that Walks, Pale Rider, Kree with no name, "Paleface"
IDENTITY: Publicly known
OCCUPATION: Mercenary; former assassin
CITIZENSHIP: Kree Empire
PLACE OF BIRTH: Marxhotz, Kree Empire, Magellanic Cloud galaxy
KNOWN RELATIVES: Sim-Del (father, deceased), unidentified mother (deceased)
GROUP AFFILIATION: Formerly Kree underground, Nameless Kree
EDUCATION: Unrevealed
HEIGHT: 5'7"
WEIGHT: 147 lbs.
EYES: Pale blue; formerly black with red irises (no visible pupil)
HAIR: White with pale blue; formerly black and white stripes

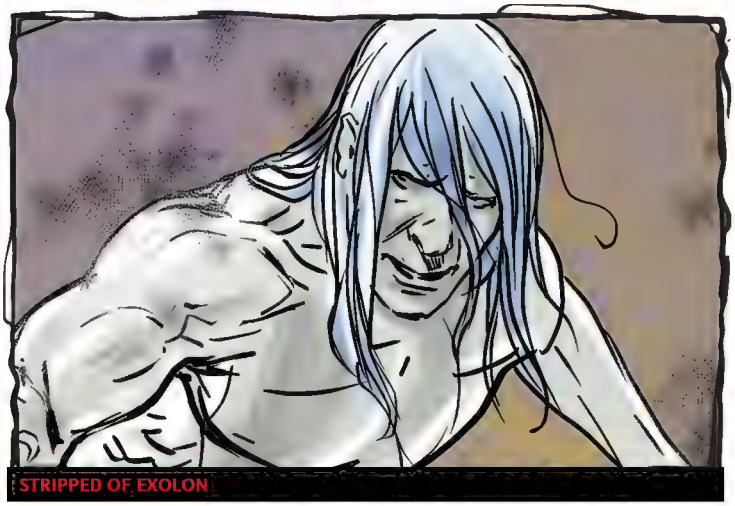
HISTORY: Eons ago, while creating an army of symbiotic warriors in his quest to return the universe to eternal darkness, Knull discarded his failed experiments in the Exoteric Latitude realm. Centuries later, the Kree Zak-Del was born in an outlander settlement on the paradise-like Marxhotz planetoid, where the Kree Empire also housed a prison facility. Apparently aware of Knull, Kree inventor Sim-Del created a device that would "bring light to the entire galaxy." His efforts led to his murder by a secret Kree military society. Sim-Del's son, Zak-Del, witnessed his parents' murder and observed the military society's signet ring worn by the assassin. While fleeing Marxhotz in a spaceship, Zak-Del unintentionally went through a wormhole to the Exoteric Latitude and encountered the pale, androgynous Nameless Kree, survivors of a long-lost exploration team who had been possessed by the Exolon soul parasites, which were actually Knull's long-abandoned failed experiments. When one of the Nameless stabbed Zak-Del in the heart, the Exolon possessed him. Though the former Zak-Del embraced the Nameless' barbaric ways, his need to avenge his parents drove the now-adult being to steal the weapon and spaceship of the Nameless' leader and escape the Exoteric Latitude.

When the former Zak-Del arrived in the Kree Empire, he found it being invaded by the techno-organic Phalanx. While resisting the Phalanx the former Zak-Del earned the name Wraith due to his calm nature and pale skin. When the Phalanx's leader, the murderous robot Ultron, claimed a cache of Kree Sentry robots as a giant robot body, Wraith coated the robot with the Exolon, trapping Ultron's consciousness within it while

WITH EXOLON

rebellion forces destroyed it. Wraith then used the Exolon to purge the Phalanx's taint from Kree citizens before resuming his quest for his parents' murderer. Later, when the Titan Eros (Starfox) sought to capture his adoptive niece Gamora to ensure she didn't inadvertently house the consciousness of his deceased, murderous brother Thanos, Wraith agreed to help capture her in exchange for information about Knull and the Exolon. After successfully procuring Gamora for Eros, Wraith was given an information device and departed, but not before secretly stealing a teleportation device from Eros. Wraith followed the information to Marxhotz where he found strange symbols on a wall in his father's abandoned lab. Wraith teleported to coordinates in Eros' information, arriving at the planet Klyntar. There, he had a vision of Earth's Eddie Brock (the host of the Venom symbiote) just before Knull broke free from a centuries-long imprisonment at the planet's center. Knull explained the Exolon's origins just before he stripped them from Wraith to forge a sword. Adrift in space, the powerless Zak-Del encountered a bright light, a symbol that matched what he saw in his father's lab, and heard a voice that caused the void (darkness) to scream. Realizing this light was Knull's opposite, Zak-Del teleported to Earth to tell Brock that a god of light was coming. After delivering the message, Zak-Del's atoms were apparently torn apart somehow, leaving the god of light's symbol burnt into the concrete where he stood.

ABILITIES/ACCESSORIES (ABRIDGED): When wearing the Exolon as Wraith, Zak-Del was covered in a black membrane, healed rapidly (essentially preventing death), and did not tire or feel pain. With the Exolon, he had enhanced strength, could apparently survive in space, and did not register to technology as a living being. He could control his Exolon from miles away, cause them to swarm, project fear into opponents, cure Phalanx infections, and absorb energy blasts or others' souls. He carried a polymorphic weapon that he could mentally transform into any other weapon he could think of such as a whip, bladed weapons, energy blaster, staff, or even binoculars, and he rode a motorcycle-like spaceship. He had a teleportation device he wore on his wrist that could traverse universal distances and was an experienced fighter.



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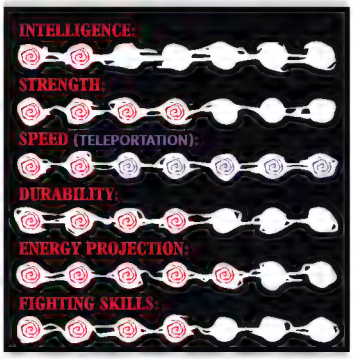


FIRST APPEARANCE: (Vision) *Annihilation: Conquest Prologue #1* (2007); (physical) *Annihilation: Conquest — Wraith #1* (2007); (identified) *Annihilation: Conquest — Wraith #2* (2007); (Zak-Del) *Web of Venom: Wraith #1* (2020)

ART BY KYLE HOTZ, CLINT LANGLEY & GUIU VILLANOVA

#3.5 CONNECTING VARIANTS BY
LEINIL FRANCIS YU & SUNNY GHO

#1 WRAPAROUND VARIANT BY
TODD NAUCK & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

#5 WRAPAROUND VARIANT BY
BRETT BOOTH, ADELSO CORONA & NOLAN WOODARD

HEIRS TO THE THRONE

While his focus on Earth is a recent development, Knull has been readying himself for a war against the light and life for eons, and **the symbiotes**, while arguably Knull's most dangerous and perfect creations were certainly not the first...

KNULL

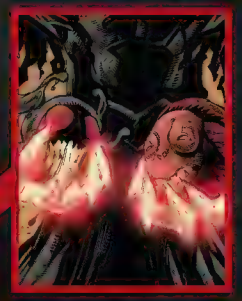
The god and creator of the symbiotes, Knull is the ruler of the ABYSS, the existential chasm between the destroyed previous universe and the prime reality that took its place. Swearing vengeance on every living thing birthed by the ***Celestials***, Knull gave life to creations of his own...

THE NECROSWORD

Death itself made manifest, the ***Necrosword***, or **All-Black**, was forged in the core of a dead Celestial. The first weapon Knull formed in his war against the light, it is capable of slaying Celestials and can be summoned from the living darkness of which the symbiotes are composed.

THE VOID KNIGHT

Born to combat the ***Silver Surfer***, the ***Void Knight*** would perhaps rank as one of Knull's favorite creations, were the God-King of the Symbiotes capable of such sentiment. The Lord of the Abyss felt a kinship with this powerful and dangerous creation and almost felt regret when the Surfer erased it from existence.



THE SYMBIOTES

Before Knull encountered Thor, he realized that his dragons would not be numerous enough to extinguish life in the universe and return it to its blissful state before the existence of the Celestials. So he began to experiment, manipulating ***darkness*** into a living form. In time, Knull realized that rather than eradicating life, he could simply **corrupt** it.

DARK CARNAGE

Trapped, Knull reached into the psychic darkness of his symbiotic creations, hoping to psychically connect with any receptive host. He did this for lifetimes until he found one in **Cletus Kasady**. Long dead, Kasady's corpse was obtained by an Earthbound cult that has worshipped Knull for generations. Bonded to the last remnants of an incinerated symbiote dragon, Kasady was resurrected as a new **Dark Carnage** and unleashed absolute chaos on an unsuspecting New York and world...

THE SYMBIOTE DRAGONS

Though their origins remain shrouded in mystery, the symbiote dragons were created to surge through space and destroy any life they encountered. Not shackled by vulnerabilities to sonics and fire (unless in the most ***extreme*** amounts), they even reached as far as the Milky Way galaxy and Earth's local solar system. Tormenting humankind, they served as inspiration for chapters of Earth's shared mythology and manifested Knull's wrathful will on an unsuspecting universe.

THE EXOLON

With each attempt at controlling the living Abyss, Knull grew closer to a perfected design. The place he sent the less-successful of his experiments became known as the Exoteric Latitude. An as-yet relatively unexplored region of space, the **Exoteric Latitude** is home to the **Exolon**, creatures that, true to their nature, found hosts in a group of unwitting Kree who happened to drift through their corner of the universe.

THE SYMBIOTE HIVE

As the symbiote species grew, Knull remained psychically connected to all of them. What was once a few dragons or symbiotes became a teeming hive mind with Knull at its center. Ultimately, that connection proved to be his undoing, as his creations rebelled and entombed him at the heart of what would come to be known as the symbiote homeworld, **Klyntar**.

OTHER EXPERIMENTS

Evidence suggests that there are other organisms in the universe that Knull created, adrift among the stars. Whatever their origins, one thing is certain — Knull has ***some*** psychic sway over them.

PRE-CREATION

Knull forges the Necrosword and begins the experiments that would eventually become the symbiote species and its offshoots. **(VENOM #1-6, SILVER SURFER: BLACK)**

~1000 BCE

Knull, encased in symbiote armor, battles a mysterious golden god on the homeworld of Gorr the God Butcher.
(THOR: GOD OF THUNDER #6)

~700 CE–~1970

Encased in ice at the bottom of the ocean, the Grendel lies dormant, lost to time.

~ONE YEAR AGO

After the dissolution of S.H.I.E.L.D., the frozen Grendel symbiote breaks out of containment and unleashes its fury on an unsuspecting New York City. Aided by the younger Spider-Man, Eddie Brock incinerates the monster, but **the Maker** acquires a small sample of its remains. **(VENOM #1-6)**

~THREE MONTHS AGO

Dark Carnage launches an all-out assault on the remaining living symbiote hosts, including Venom. With no choice, the Venom symbiote absorbs the Grendel from Cletus Kasady and is once again subsumed into Knull's hive. With enough of the Codex restored to free himself, Knull disperses the symbiotes that form the planet Klyntar around him and re-forms them into a horde of hundreds of thousands of dragons — and begins a death march across the universe... **(ABSOLUTE CARNAGE)**

~TWO WEEKS AGO

Eddie Brock warns the Avengers that the Codex is complete and Knull has begun a campaign across the galaxy. Before they can properly mount a counteroffensive and extract all possible intel from Brock, he is swept into the timestream after being ambushed by Mac Gargan.
(FREE COMIC BOOK DAY: SPIDER-MAN/VENOM 2020)

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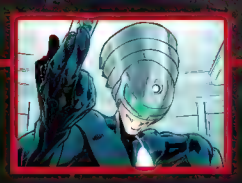
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VENOM

Years ago, disgraced reporter Eddie Brock stumbled upon an alien organism during one of the lowest points of his life. Severed from its own collected consciousness, the symbiote found a willing partner in Brock, and the two became **Venom**, a vigilante in their own right, who eliminated the criminal element with extreme prejudice.

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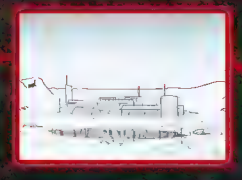
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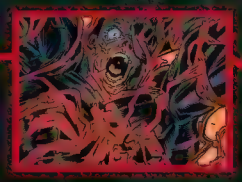
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~100,000 YEARS AGO

Knull dispatches the dragon symbiotes into the universe to eradicate all life. **(VENOM #4)**

~600 CE

The dragon symbiotes arrive on Earth and attack humankind in Scandinavia. Mistaking the creature for an Earthbound beast, humankind names it **Grendel.**

Thor comes to their aid and dispatches the dragon with a bolt of lightning. His attack causes a feedback loop within Knull's symbiote hive that incapacitates the god-king. The symbiotes rebel and entomb their creator. **(VENOM #1-6)**

~1971

Led by Nick Fury, S.H.I.E.L.D. locates and excavates the Grendel, sampling its genetic material and exposing United States service members to it in small doses.
(WED OF VENOM: VE'NAM)

~TEN MONTHS AGO

The Maker's sample of the Grendel is stolen from his laboratory by a cult that has worshipped Knull for generations. Also in possession of the corpse of Cletus Kasady, the cult bonds the Grendel's remains to Cletus', and the result is the creation of a new **Dark Carnage. (WED OF VENOM: CARNAGE BORN)**

~ONE MONTH AGO

The interstellar warrior and Guardian of the Galaxy called **Wraith**, convinced that Knull is responsible for the parasitic Exolon that gave him his abilities, arrives at the planet Klyntar. Knull, now freed, acknowledges that the Exolon are one of his experiments and strips Wraith of them. Dying without the Exolon, Wraith teleports to Earth to warn Eddie Brock that Knull is free. **(WED OF VENOM: WRAITH)**

HEIRS TO THE THRONE

While his focus on Earth is a recent development, Knull has been readying himself for a war against the light and life for eons, and ***the symbiotes*** while arguably Knull's most dangerous and perfect creations were certainly not the first...

KNULL

The god and creator of the symbiotes, Knull is the ruler of the ABYSS, the existential chasm between the destroyed previous universe and the prime reality that took its place. Swearing vengeance on every living thing birthed by the ***Celestials***, Knull gave life to creations of his own...

THE NECROSWORD

Death itself made manifest, the ***Necrosword***, or **All-Black**, was forged in the core of a dead Celestial. The first weapon Knull formed in his war against the light, it is capable of slaying Celestials and can be summoned from the living darkness of which the symbiotes are composed...

THE VOID KNIGHT

Born to combat the ***Silver Surfer***, the ***Void Knight*** would perhaps rank as one of Knull's favorite creations, were the God-King of the Symbiotes capable of such sentiment. The Lord of the Abyss felt a kinship with this powerful and dangerous creation and almost felt regret when the Surfer

THE SYMBIOTES

Before Knull encountered Thor, he realized that his dragons would not be numerous enough to extinguish life in the universe and return it to its blissful state before the existence of the Celestials. So he began to experiment, manipulating ***darkness*** into a living form. In time, Knull realized that rather than eradicating life, he could simply **corrupt** it.

DARK CARNAGE

Trapped, Knull reached into the psychic darkness of his symbiotic creations, hoping to psychically connect with any receptive host. He did this for lifetimes until he found one in **Cletus Kasady**. Long dead, Kasady's corpse was obtained by an Earthbound cult that has worshipped Knull for generations. Bonded to the last remnants of an incinerated symbiote dragon, Kasady was resurrected as a new **Dark Carnage** and unleashed absolute chaos on an unsuspecting New York and world...

THE SYMBIOTE DRAGONS

Though their origins remain shrouded in mystery, the symbiote dragons were created to surge through space and destroy any life they encountered. Not shackled by vulnerabilities to sonics and fire (unless in the most ***extreme*** amounts), they even reached as far as the Milky Way galaxy and Earth's local solar system. Tormenting humankind, they served as inspiration for chapters of Earth's shared mythology and manifested Knull's wrathful will on an unsuspecting

THE EXOLON

With each attempt at controlling the living Abyss, Knull grew closer to a perfected design. The place he sent the less-successful of his experiments became known as the Exoteric Latitude. An as-yet relatively unexplored region of space, the **Exoteric Latitude** is home to the **Exolon**, creatures that, true to their nature, found hosts in a group of unwitting Kree who happened to drift through their corner of the universe.

THE SYMBIOTE HIVE

As the symbiote species grew, Knull remained psychically connected to all of them. What was once a few dragons or symbiotes became a teeming hive mind with Knull at its center. Ultimately, that connection proved to be his undoing, as his creations rebelled and entombed him at the heart of what would come to be known as the symbiote homeworld, **Klyntar**.

OTHER EXPERIMENTS

Evidence suggests that there are other organisms in the universe that Knull created, adrift among the stars. Whatever their origins, one thing is certain — Knull has ***some*** psychic sway over them.

PRE-CREATION

Knull forges the Necrosword and begins the experiments that would eventually become the symbiote species and its offshoots. **(VENOM #1-6, SILVER SURFER: BLACK)**

1

~1000 BCE

Knull, encased in symbiote armor, battles a mysterious golden god on the homeworld of Gorr the God Butcher. **(THOR: GOD OF THUNDER #6)**

3

~700 CE–~1970

Encased in ice at the bottom of the ocean, the Grendel lies dormant, lost to time.

5

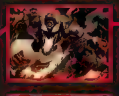
~ONE YEAR AGO

After the dissolution of S.H.I.E.L.D., the frozen Grendel symbiote breaks out of containment and unleashes its fury on an unsuspecting New York City. Aided by the younger Spider-Man, Eddie Brock incinerates the monster, but the **Maker** acquires a small sample of its remains. **(VENOM #1-6)**

7

~THREE MONTHS AGO

Dark Carnage launches an all-out assault on the remaining living symbiote hosts, including Venom. With no choice, the Venom symbiote absorbs the Grendel from Cletus Kasady and is once again subsumed into Knull's hive. With enough of the Codex restored to free himself, Knull disperses the symbiotes that form the planet Klyntar around him and re-forms them into a horde of hundreds of thousands of dragons — and begins a death march across the universe...



9

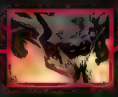
~TWO WEEKS AGO

Eddie Brock warns the Avengers that the Codex is complete and Knull has begun a campaign across the galaxy. Before they can properly mount a counteroffensive and extract all possible intel from Brock, he is swept into the timestream after being ambushed by Mac Gargan. **(FREE COMIC BOOK DAY: SPIDER-MAN/VENOM 2020)**

11

VENOM

Years ago, disgraced reporter Eddie Brock stumbled upon an alien organism during one of the lowest points of his life. Severed from its own collected consciousness, the symbiote found a willing partner in Brock, and the two became **Venom**, a vigilante in their own right, who eliminated the criminal element with extreme prejudice.



2

~100,000 YEARS AGO

Knull dispatches the dragon symbiotes into the universe to eradicate all life. **(VENOM #4)**

4

~600 CE

The dragon symbiotes arrive on Earth and attack humankind in Scandinavia. Mistaking the creature for an Earthbound beast, humankind names it **Grendel**.

Thor comes to their aid and dispatches the dragon with a bolt of lightning. His attack causes a feedback loop within Knull's symbiote hive that incapacitates the god-king. The symbiotes rebel and entomb their creator. **(VENOM #1-6)**

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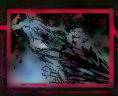

10

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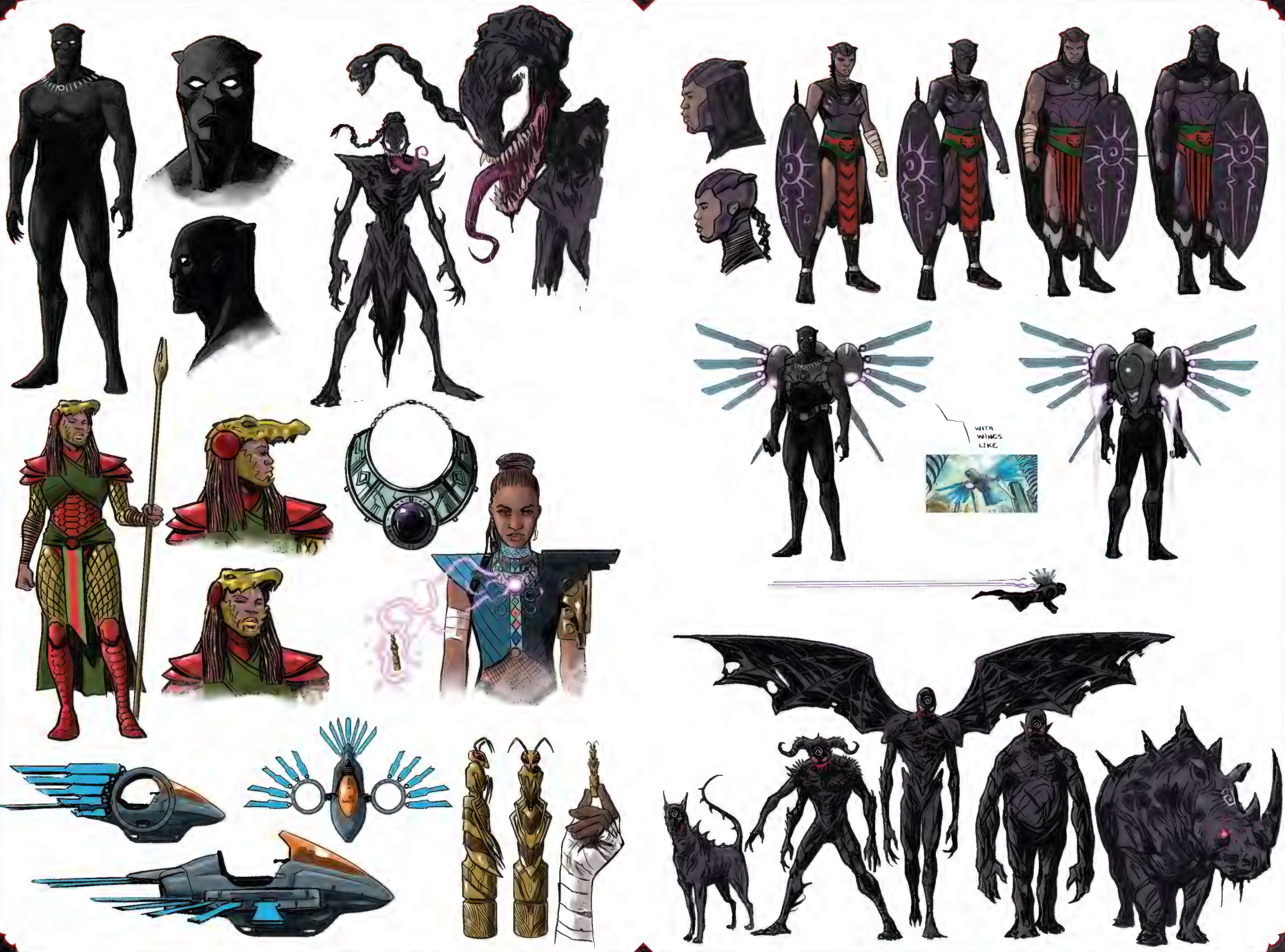
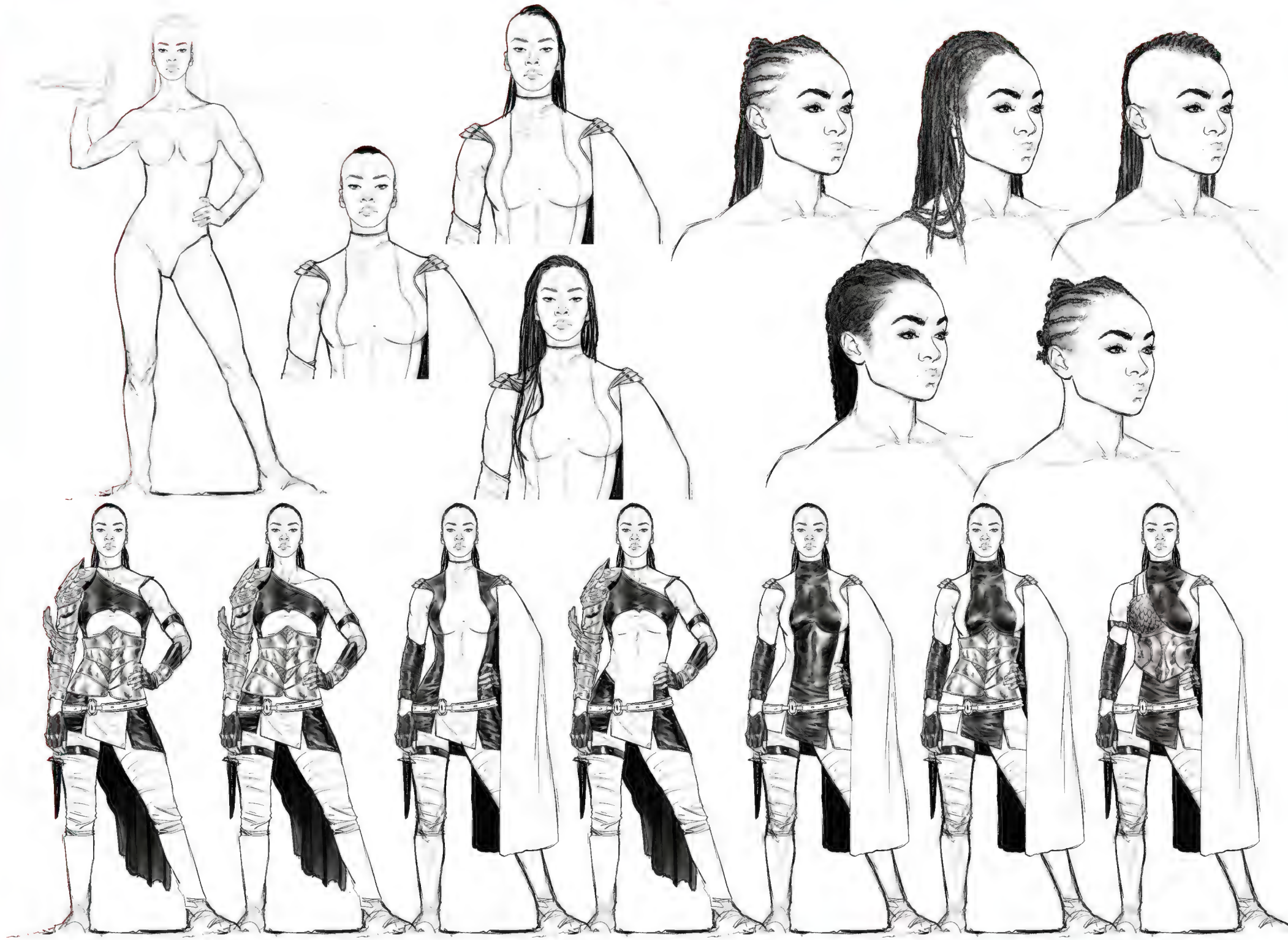
***KNULL: MARVEL TALES* SERVED AS A PRIMER FOR THE "KING IN BLACK" EVENT, REPRINTING *VENOM* #3-4, *WEB OF VENOM: CARNAGE BORN* AND THE LEAD STORY FROM *VENOM* #25. COVER BY INHYUK LEE**

KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE CHARACTER DESIGNS BY **FLAVIANO**

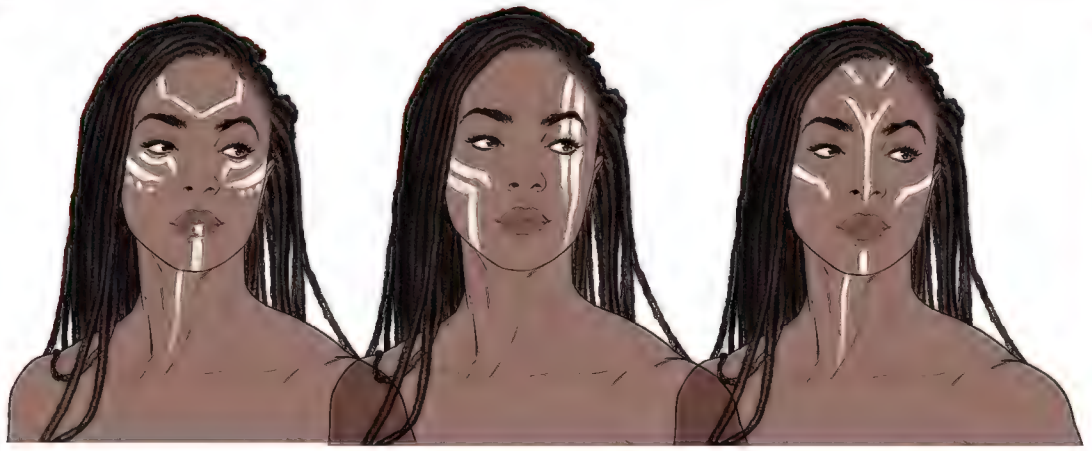
KING IN BLACK: WICCAN AND HULKLING CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
LUCIANO VECCHIO



BLACK PANTHER CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
GERMÁN PERALTA



KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
MATTIA DE IULIS



KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES CHARACTER DESIGNS BY
MATTIA DE IULIS

KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1 NOTES ON VISUALS

BY JASON AARON & TORUNN GRØNDEKK

We're spending much of the issue in the world between the living and the dead, and it's important to convey that this is a *different* place, somewhere that exists parallel to our world. So, here's our suggestion: let's make it reverse-space. All white, black stars are glinting in the distance. Mists of grey ghosts, astral bones, and skulls floating around. Things get stuck in limbo, the rules are different here, and it's not a safe place, as we're about to see.

The Celestial – the dead.
In this issue, we meet the hollow shell of a dead Celestial, and the souls that live within it. The Celestial itself is huge and headless. The armor is old and broken in places. Inside it, millions of souls are trapped. They're powering the ancient Celestial tech inside the armor. I have this idea that the creatures or structures emerging from the Celestial would move and morph together like the microbots in *Big Hero 6*.

Every "bot" is a piece of someone's soul. I don't think they would be as uniform as the microbots; this is Celestial tech and probably both advanced and freaky. When they break apart, they break like glass, and Valkyrie can see them for what they are — pieces of souls — and so can we to a certain point. But they can reform and reshape themselves. So, they would look like fighters at times, traditional humanoids, huge and terrifying, probably more skeletal than man-like, and other times, the structure could be a hand, tentacles reaching out — or as we see later — a maelstrom.

The structures and creatures are pallid, gray, but when they break into pieces, there are colors in the pieces, like when you see the world reflected in a water drop.

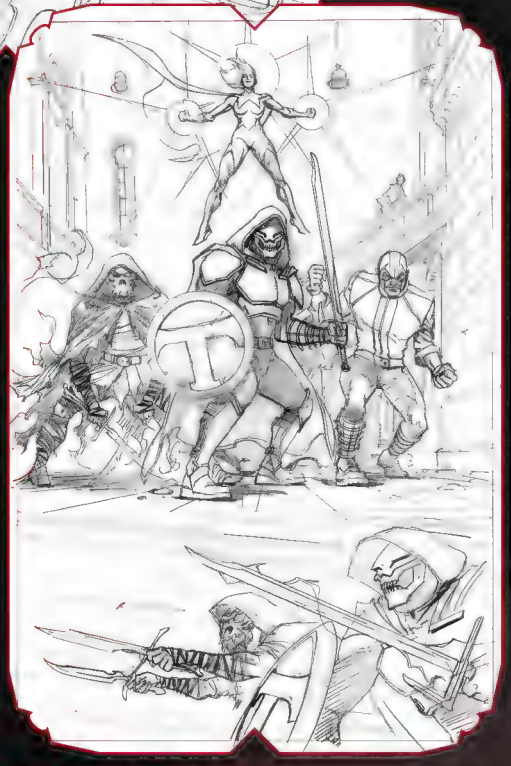
KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1
PAGE 4 ART BY **GUIU VILANOVA**

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1
PAGE 13 ART BY **DANILO S. BEYRUTH**

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #2
PAGE 10 ART BY **KYLE HOTZ**

KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #3
PAGE 2 ART BY **DANILO S. BEYRUTH**

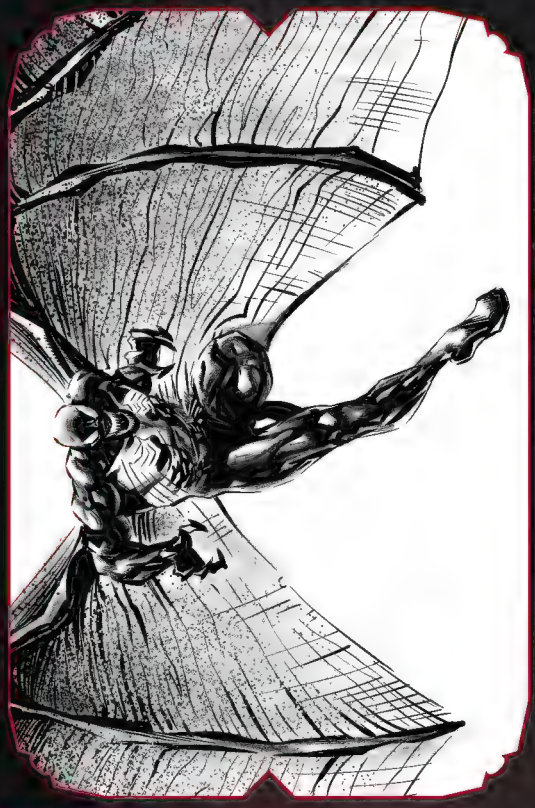
KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2, PAGE 2 ART PROCESS BY
JUAN FERREYRA



KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2 PAGE 7 ART PROCESS
JUAN FERREYRA

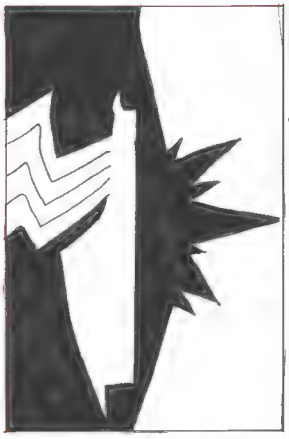
KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2, PAGES 8 & 9 ARTWORK
JUAN FERREYRA

KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #2 PAGE 12 ART PROCESS BY
JUAN FERREYRA



VENOM #31-34 VARIANT COVER ART BY
RYAN STEGMAN

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #2 & #4 COVER SKETCHES BY
GREG LAND



1

2

- COULD ALSO BE A BACKGROUND INSTEAD OF THE CITYSCAPES.

3

4

5

6

SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #3 COVER SKETCHES BY
GREG LAND

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #54 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
PAULO SIQUEIRA & RACHELLE ROSENBERG

AVENGERS #39 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
GREG TOCCHINI

BLACK CAT #1 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
TAURIN CLARKE

BLACK WIDOW #4 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
SKAN

CAPTAIN AMERICA #28 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
JULIAN TOTINO TEDESCO

CAPTAIN MARVEL #24 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
TRADD MOORE

CONAN THE BARBARIAN #17 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
E.M. GIST

DAREDEVIL #25 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
KEN LASHLEY & NOLAN WOODARD

FANTASTIC FOUR #27 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
JUAN FERREYRA

GHOST RIDER: RETURN OF VENGEANCE
KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
KYLE HOTZ & DAN BROWN

GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #9
KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
RYAN BROWN

IMMORTAL HULK #42 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
ALEXANDER LOZANO

IRON MAN #4 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
DAVE RAPOZA

MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #21
KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
INHYUK LEE

SHANG-CHI #4 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
KHARY RANDOLPH & EMILIO LOPEZ

SPIDER-WOMAN #7 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
PEACH MOMOKO

THOR #10 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
KEN LASHLEY & NOLAN WOODARD

VENOM #31 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
FRANCISCO HERRERA & FERNANDA RIZO

WOLVERINE #8 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
DAVE RAPOZA

X-MEN #16 KNULLIFIED VARIANT BY
IBAN COELLO & JESUS ABURTOV

KNULL IS HERE!

The eldritch god and his army of symbiote dragons have cut a swath through the cosmos. Now they have arrived on Earth, and its greatest heroes will be powerless to save the world from falling into darkness. All hope rests with **Venom**, but what happens when **Eddie Brock** falls? Featuring **Donny Cates** and **Ryan Stegman**'s blockbuster **King in Black** and every single crossover and tie-in in one monstrous volume!

COLLECTING *KING IN BLACK #1-5*; *KING IN BLACK: IMMORTAL HULK, IRON MAN/DOCTOR DOOM, BLACK KNIGHT, MARAUDERS, BLACK PANTHER, CAPTAIN AMERICA, WICCAN AND HULKLING, SPIDER-MAN, SCREAM* AND *GHOST RIDER*; *KING IN BLACK: GWENOM VS. CARNAGE #1-3*; *KING IN BLACK: NAMOR #1-5*; *KING IN BLACK: PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES #1-3*; *KING IN BLACK: RETURN OF THE VALKYRIES #1-4*; *KING IN BLACK: THUNDERBOLTS #1-3*; *SYMBIOTE SPIDER-MAN: KING IN BLACK #1-5*; *BLACK CAT (2020) #1-3*; *DAREDEVIL (2019) #26-27*; *DEADPOOL (2019) #10*; *FANTASTIC FOUR (2018) #29-30*; *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY (2020) #10*; *MILES MORALES: SPIDER-MAN #23*; *S.W.O.R.D. (2020) #2-4*; *SAVAGE AVENGERS (2019) #17-19*; *SPIDER-WOMAN (2020) #7-8*; *THE UNION #1-2*; *VENOM (2018) #31-34*; AND *KING IN BLACK HANDBOOK #1* — BY DONNY CATES, RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER, FRANK MARTIN AND MORE.

PARENTAL ADVISORY

MARVEL